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THE MODERN DRAMA SERIES
EDITED BY EDWIN BJÖRKMAN

MR. FAUST
ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

MR. FAUST

BY

ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

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The author gratefully acknowledges his debt for permission to reprint one of the lyrics herein, which appeared originally in "Poetry."

INTRODUCTION

THROUGH all the work of Arthur Davison Ficke runs a note of bigness that compels attention even when one feels that he is still groping both for form and thought. In "Mr. Faust" this note has assumed commanding proportions, while at the same time the uncertainty manifest in some of the earlier work has almost wholly disappeared. Intellectually as well as artistically, this play shows a surprising maturity. It impresses me, for one, as the expression of a well-rounded and very profound philosophy of life — and this philosophy stands in logical and sympathetic relationship to what the western world to-day regards as its most advanced thought. The evolutionary conception of life is the foundation of that philosophy, which, however, has little or nothing in common with the materialistic and dogmatic evolutionism of the last century. The work sprung from that philosophy is full of the new sense of mystery, which makes the men of to-day realize that the one attitude leading nowhere is that of denial. Faith and doubt walk hand in hand, each one being to the other check and goad alike. And with this new freedom to believe as well as to question, man becomes once more the centre of his known universe. But there he stands, humbly proud, not as the arrogant master of a "dead" world, but merely as

the foremost servant of a life-principle which asserts itself in the grain of sand as in the brain of man.

Yet "Mr. Faust" is by no means a philosophical or moral tract. It is, first of all and throughout, a living, breathing work of art, instinct with beauty and faithful in its every line to the principle laid down by its author in the preface to one of his earlier volumes: "Poetical imagination must fail altogether if it descends from its natural sphere and assumes work which is properly that of economic or political experience. Nor can it usefully urge its own peculiar intuitions as things of practical validity."

Mr. Ficke was born in 1883 at Davenport, Iowa, and there he is still living, although I understand that he has since then been wandering in so many other regions, physical and spiritual, that he can hardly call it his home. He graduated from Harvard in 1904 and spent the next travelling in all sorts of strange and poetic places — Japan, India, the Greek mountains, the Aegean Islands. Returning to the United States, he studied law and was admitted to the Bar in 1908. While studying, he taught English for a year at the University of Iowa, lecturing on the history of the Arthurian Legends.

He was a mere boy when he began to write, turning from the first to the metrical form of expression and remaining faithful to it in most of his subsequent efforts. His poems and essays have been printed in almost all the leading magazines. So far he has published five volumes of verse: "From the Isles," a series of lyrics of the Aegean Sea; "The Happy Princess," a romantic narrative poem; "The Earth Passion," a series of poems which may be characterized

as the effort of a star-gazer to find satisfaction in the things of the earth; "The Breaking of Bonds," a Shelleyan drama of social unrest, where he has tried to formulate a hope for our final emergence from the maelstrom of class-conflict; and "Twelve Japanese Painters," a group of poems expressive of the peculiar and alluring charm of the great Japanese painters and their world of remote beauty.

EDWIN BJÖRKMAN.

LIST OF PLAYS BY ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE

The Breaking of Bonds, 1910
Mr. Faust, 1913

MR. FAUST

INSCRIPTION

Palé Goethe, Marlowe, Lessing — calm your fears!
None plots to steal your laurel wreaths away.
Approach; take tickets: you shall witness here
The unromantic Faustus of to-day —

A Faustus whom no mystic choirs sustain,
No wizard fiends blind with prodigious spell.
The mortal earth shall serve him as domain
Whether he mount to Heaven or sink to Hell.

Yet, mount or sink, your lights around him shine.
And there shall flow, bubbling with woe or mirth,
From these new bottles your familiar wine,
As ancient as man's rule upon the earth.

MR. FAUST

THE FIRST ACT

The scene is the library of John Faust, a large handsome room panelled in dark oak and lined with rows of books in open book-shelves. On the right is a carved white stone fireplace, with deep chairs before it. In the far left corner of the room, on a pedestal, stands a stiff bust of George Washington. Near it hangs a wonderful Titian portrait, a thing of another world. The furniture looks as if it were, and probably is, plunder from the palace of some prince of the Renaissance.

A fire is burning in the fireplace; it, and several shaded lights, make a subdued brilliancy in the room. Before the fire sits John Faust. Brander and Oldham, both in evening dress, lounge comfortably in chairs near Faust. All three are smoking, and tall highball glasses stand within their reach.

BRANDER

You are a thorn to me, a thorn in the flesh.
Contagiously you bring to me mistrust
Of all my landmarks, when, as here to-night,
Out of the midst of every pleasant gift
The world can offer you, you raise your voice
In scoffing irony against each face,
Form, action, motive, that together make
Your life, and ours.

FAUST

Dear man, I did not mean
To send my poor jokes burrowing like a mole
Beneath your prized foundations.

BRANDER

Not alone
Your attitude to-night; you always seem
As if withholding from all days and deeds
Moving around you — from our life and yours —
Your full assent.

FAUST

Dear Brander! Is it true
I am as bad as that? Well, though I were,
Why should it trouble you? If you find sport
In this strange game, this fevered interplay,
This hodge-podge crazy-quilt which we are pleased
To call our life — why, like it! And say: Damned
Be all who are not with me!

BRANDER

Are not you?

FAUST

I claim the criminal's privilege, and decline
To answer.

OLDHAM

Faust, might I presume so far
As to suggest that I should like a drink
Before you two start breaking furniture
Over this matter?

FAUST

Certainly; I beg
Your pardon; I neglected you.
(*He busies himself with the glasses*)
No, no,

We won't wage combat over this. You 're right,
Doubtless, as usual, Brander. I have not
Your fortunate placidity of mind,
And I get grumpy.

Come, fill up your glass;
And let us drink to the glories of the world.
Down with the cynic!

BRANDER

Down with him, indeed!
And may he cease to trouble you. The world
Is pretty glorious when a man is young,
As we are, and so many splendid choices
Lie all around him. There have never been
Such opportunities as now are spread
Before us. Men are doing mighty things
To-day. A critic tells me that last night
Wullf at the opera sang "*La ci darem*"
With an artistic brilliancy of tone
That never has been heard on any stage
Anywhere in the world. You moped at home,
Doubtless; but it was wonderful, on my word.

OLDHAM

Whom did you go with?

BRANDER

Midge.

OLDHAM

Ah, Midge again!
I thought so. . . .

BRANDER

Well, I don't know why I should n't.

OLDHAM

Those rosy-toned remarks gave you away.

Perhaps 't was not "Don Juan" that last night
Was at its best, but Midge. Where did you sit?

BRANDER

Up in the gallery.

OLDHAM

The top one?

BRANDER

Yes.

OLDHAM

Once more, I thought so. You and Midge would look
Nice in a box! Yes, I will pay for one
If you will take it.

BRANDER

Oh, leave me alone!

FAUST

Who is this "Midge" you speak of?

OLDHAM

Midge, dear Faust,
Is short for Margaret; which, you may guess,
Describes a lady of the female sex;
Said person being serviceably employed
As maid-of-all-work for some ancient dame
In Brander's own apartment house. She has,
Beside what other virtues I know not,
A most bewitching ankle and a taste
For opera. And dear Brander's kindly heart
Is so moved by the sight of these combined,
He sometimes sneaks, by lonely alley-ways,
With his fair Midge, and in the gallery
High out of sight of all of us enjoys
Her and the opera.

FAUST

I did not know
You had a lady-love.

BRANDER

It 's hardly that!
But she 's a mighty jolly little thing.

FAUST

What sort of girl is she?

BRANDER

A mighty nice one!
Full of all kinds of happiness; but shy.
I 'd like to see some rounder try to speak
To her on Broadway. She looks like a lady!

FAUST

That is too bad.

BRANDER

Oh, pshaw! Don't lecture me;
I 'm not a saint; in fact, few of us are.

FAUST

Unfortunately not. I least of all.
And yet I wonder if. . . . However, I
Do not presume to lecture you. Remember
One thing, though, as my friend. Your Midge has deeps
Not pleasant under her if you let go.

BRANDER

Oh, I will not let go! . . . Not yet, at least.

OLDHAM

Faust really means it, strange as it may seem.
Of late he has turned moralist.

FAUST

Not quite:
But just a little tired of pursuits
That end regretfully.

OLDHAM

Well, don't pursue. . . .

BRANDER

(*Goes to the window and raises the shade*)
See, what a night it is! The stars are out
As if a bucketful of them had spilled
Across the sky. And here we sit like owls,
Blinking and staring at a little fire
When heaven is burning! I 'm afraid it 's time
For me to leave this owlish parliament;
And I shall probably knock holes in half
The windows of the town as I walk home
Star-gazingly. And here it 's after twelve!
I might have guessed it from the fatal fact
That we 'd begun to talk philosophy:
No sane man ever does, except in hours
When by all rights he should be sound asleep.
Good night to both of you. And don't stay up
Talking till morning.

OLDHAM

Well, good night.

FAUST

Good night,
Brander, I 'm sorry you must go: come in
Quite soon again, and I will try to be
Less disagreeable than I was to-night.
[*Brander goes out.*

OLDHAM

I 'll bet he takes an arc-light for a star!

FAUST

He is warm-hearted; I am fond of him.
But Midge! . . . However, one can say no more. . . .

OLDHAM

He 's a good fellow; but he tires me
Sometimes.

FAUST

Dear boy, I envy him.

OLDHAM

Of course,
And so do I; but I would not exchange
Heads for a kingdom.

FAUST

Are you so fond, then,
Of what 's in yours?

OLDHAM

No, but at least I have
A certain faint perception of the gilded
And quite preposterous crudeness of our days —
The sordid sickness of his life, and ours;
And that is something to be thankful for.

FAUST

Gratitude is a graceful gift.

OLDHAM

Come, come!
What snake has bitten you, that to your lips
A poisoned irony so bitter springs
To-night?

FAUST

I am revolving in my brain
This serious question: whether 't is not best
That one turn humorist. The mind that seeks
Holiness, finds it seldom; who pursues
Beauty perhaps shall in a lengthened life
Find it perfected only once or twice.
But if one's quest were humor — what rich stores,

What tropic jungles of it, lie to hand
At every moment, everywhere one turns —
What luscious meadows for the humorist!

OLDHAM

No — for the satirist! There is no humor
In what you see and I see when we look
On this crude world wherein our lives are spent —
This sordid sphere where we are but spectators —
This crass grim modern spectacle of lives
Torn with consuming lust of one desire —
Gold, gold, forever gold — Or do you find
Humor in that?

FAUST

It might be found, perhaps:
The joke 's on someone!

OLDHAM

There 's no joke in it!
It is the waste, the pitiful waste of life!
Men — slaves to gather gold — become then slaves
Beneath its gathered weight. For this one hope,
All finer longings perish at their birth.
Men's eyes to-day envy no sage or seer
Or conqueror except his triumphs be
In this base sphere of commerce. The stars go out
In factory smoke; the spirit wanes and pales
In poisoned air of greed. It is an age
Of traders and of tricksters; all the high
And hounded malefactors of great wealth
Differ from the masses, in their wealth, indeed;
But in their malefaction, not at all.
Your grocer and my butcher have at heart
The selfsame aims as he to whom we pay
Tribute for every pound of coal we burn.

Their scope is narrower, but their act the same
As his — against whose millions all the tongues
Of little tricksters in each corner store
Babble and rail and shriek!

FAUST

Almost you do
Persuade me to turn humorist on the spot!
Was ever, since Gargantua, such a vine
Heavy with bursting clusters of the grape
Of humor?

OLDHAM

Of corruption! You may laugh;
But there 's in all your laughter hardly more
Mirth than in my upbraidings. Ah, I grow
So weary of this low-horizoned scene,
Our generation; I am always drawn
In thought toward that great noon of human life
When in the streets of Florence walked the powers
And princes of the earth — Politian, Pico,
Angelo, Leonardo, Botticelli —
And a half-hundred more of starry-eyed
Sons of the morning, in whose hearts the god
Struggled unceasing. Ah, those lucent brains,
Those bright imaginations, those keen souls,
Arrowy toward each target where truth's gold
Glimmered, or beauty's! Those were days indeed;
We shall not look upon their like again.

FAUST

I am not sure.

OLDHAM

Then take my word for it!

FAUST

I am not sure; the lamentable fact

To me seems otherwise. For I believe
That this vile age of commerce and corruption
Which you describe in very eloquent terms,
Is still, upon the whole, the best that yet
Has graced our earth. I think not more than you
Am I in love with it; but, looking back,
I fail to see a better, though I peer
Into remote arboreal history.

OLDHAM

When I was six, my teachers taught me that.
Why, one would think that you had never heard
Of Greece or Italy!

FAUST

And what were they?
Your Renaissance, despite its few bright gleams,
Lies like a swamp of darkness, soaked in blood
And agony: such tortures as we scarce
Dream of to-day writhe through it; and the stench
Of slaughtered cities and corrupted thrones —
Yes, even the Papal throne — draw me not back
With longing toward it. Rich that time might be
If one were Michael Angelo; but how
If one were peasant, or meek householder,
When the Free Captains ravaged to and fro,
And peoples were the merest pawns of kings
Enslaved by mistresses? The more I look,
The more evaporates that golden haze
Which cloaks the past; the more I doubt if men
Had ever in their breasts more lofty souls
Than those we know. And I am glad to be
A citizen of this material age.

OLDHAM

Congratulations! — tempered with surprise

At finding you, beneath your lion's skin,
So sweet an optimist — whose faith can find
All 's for the best; and the best, this great year
Nineteen Thirteen.

FAUST

Hardly so strong as that.

OLDHAM

Yes, tell me that the golden age has come!

FAUST

I quarrel not with ages — but with man;
Whose life such play and folly seems — for all
Its sweat and agony — that laughter lies
The sole escape from madness. I peruse
The present and the past, only to find
Mountains of human effort piled aloft
Like the Egyptian Pyramids, and toward
No end save folly. . . .

All is foolishness!
In Argolis, a woman, somewhat vain,
Preferred a fop to her own rightful lord
And ran away; and then for ten long years
The might of Hellas on the Trojan plain
Grappled in conflict such as had been mete
To guard Olympus, and Scamander ran
Red with heroic blood-drops. And they got
The woman. And it all was foolishness! . . .
That was your Golden Age. I hope you like it.

Foolishness! . . . Once a mariner set forth,
With all the fires of heaven lit in his breast
And godlike courage on his brow, to find

New worlds beyond the unknown wastes of sea.
He sailed; he found; he died in rusty chains:
So that, to-day, the vermin of all climes
May thither flock, and there renew the old
Familiar toil toward utter foolishness. . . .

Why all this labor unto vanity?
Why all this straining toward an empty end?

OLDHAM

Ah, you forget what Beauty was to them!
We are quite lost to that high touch to-day.
Beauty hung over them, a star to draw
Men's aspiration. That divides them quite
From our debased modernity.

FAUST

Dear Oldham!
My dear delightful visionary Oldham!
What an adorer of the past you are!

OLDHAM

Yes, I adore it sacredly, and loathe
To-day's whole content — except you! I loathe it
So much that, if I had the dynamite,
I 'd blow it all — and you and me ourselves —
Into a nebula of dust. . . . Ah, well,
We hardly can decide these things to-night,
Can we? I must be off, little as I like,
To end our midnight talking.

FAUST

Oh, not yet!

OLDHAM

I must; this is not good for me: I fear
To let myself dwell on these restless thoughts

Which with a perilous longing sometimes make
My actual days so bitter that despair
Grips me in horror. And besides, I 'm due
To pick my brother up. I have, you see,
The limousine to-night, and that entails
Its obligations. Dear modernity!
Whose Saviour is the limousine! . . . Good night!

FAUST

Good night. May all the Furies and the Gorgons
Of Greece and Florence leave you in repose
To dream to-night of white-limbed goddesses
And painters like archangels!

OLDHAM

I deserve it!
And yet I fear they will not be so kind. . . .
Sleep is no friend to me these many nights.
I do not know what wrong I can have done
That so offends her she will none of me.
One of these days, she will carry it too far. . . .
[*Oldham goes out. Faust turns out all but two of the lights; then seats himself wearily before the fire. The room is dark around his lighted figure.*

FAUST

The play drags, and the players would begone,
Out of this theatre of tinsel days
And lights and tawdry glamour, out to face
Even the blank of night, the icy stars,
The vast abysses. What the gallery-gods
Could give, they well have given; but deities
Inscrutabler than they annul all gifts
With one gift more — the restless mind that peers
Past fame, friends, learning, fortune, to enquire:

Whither? Whither? Whither? And no answer comes
To the cold player's lips. . . .

I see too much
To make my peace with any ordered rôle
And play it heartily. To-day's thin coin
Pays not my labors; and to-morrow's hope
Has never been authenticated to me
By a fulfilling hour when I might say:
"Lo, this is what I hoped!" The vision flies
As I advance; while always far ahead
Its glow makes dim the color of my days;
And I loathe life because my hope is fairer,
And know my hope a lie. Thus, Faust, my friend,
You damn yourself ingeniously to hells
Of rich variety. . . .

The eyes of men
Envy me as I pass them in the street —
Me, whom sufficient fortune, moderate fame,
Have made completely happy in their sight.
Well, I am no barbarian: let them have
The bliss of envying. . . . But I am sick
With the hour's emptiness; and great desire
Fills me for those high beauties which my dreams
Yearn ever toward. I am weary; I would go
Out to some golden sunset-lighted land
Of silence.

I have been athirst of dreams!
And all earth's common goals and gifts have been
But fuel to flame. O strange and piteous heart!

O credulous and visionary heart!
Desirous of the infinite — from defeat
Arising still to grope again for light
And the high word of vision! And in vain!
Till, not having found, its bitterness corrodes
Inward — like one betrayed by his last god. . . .

Strange, that my father was a worthy man!
Perhaps 't is his blood in me that withholds
Unreasoning my hand from washing clear
This scribbled slate with one quick tide of peace.
Would more of him were in me! that like him
I might spend eagerly a useful life
In medicining miserable men
Who were better dead — employ my force
To aid a world within whose marrow dwells
An evil none can cure, an agony
Beyond our dearest aiding.

Ah, well, well!
Such are the great men of this busy world,
Whose ardor for the game is anodyne
Against its buffets, and intoxicant
To lend it reveller's meaning. Ardor given,
All things are possible. . . .

You, old marble-face,
Who front me from the corner with that grave
Virtuous Father-of-your-Country look,
I pay you my respects; you are a light
Of leading, as I see you now. Your soul
Was never shaken by convulsive doubts
Of life or man or liberty; you built

Unsceptical of bricks, but such as lay
To hand you took, nor did your purpose shake
At prescient thought of how your edifice
Might be turned pest-house some day. Undismayed
By doubt, you rose, and in heroic mould
Led — dauntless, patient, incorruptible —
A riot over taxes. Not a star
In all the vaults of heaven could trouble you
With whisperings of more transcendent goals.
O despicable, admirable man!
How much I envy you — the devil take you!

[*The bust of Washington and its pedestal move slightly; gradually they change and shape themselves into the figure of a well-dressed man, rather short and stocky, with a sociable, commonplace face. His head, however, is very peculiarly modelled; it reminds one, indescribably and faintly, of the fact that men sprang from beasts. The high position of the ears help this impression, as does also the astonishing animal brilliance of the eyes. Faust, passing his hand over his forehead, turns away.*

FAUST

This is what comes of smoking far too much.

SATAN

Good evening, Mr. Faust.

FAUST

Well, I 'll be damned! . . .
And who, I beg, are you?

SATAN

I ask your pardon
For thus appearing in a way unknown
To strict convention. But I never set

Great store by custom; and though nowadays
I follow the proprieties, still I feel
That one need not be slavish —

FAUST

Who are you?
What are you talking of? How did you get here?

SATAN

I am, sir, Nicholas Satan, at your service.

FAUST

Nicholas Satan! Quite a name. Perhaps
Some relative of the illustrious one?

SATAN

Himself.

FAUST

Stop this cheap foolishness! Who are you?
Or shall I ring for the police?

SATAN

I am
Satan. If I appeared with colored fire
And lightnings round me, you would doubt no more.
But like your narrow and near-sighted age,
You know me not in my own natural shape.
Now let this end! Here is my proof. You once
Summoned me to your aid, and, when I came,
Weakly rejected me. You were a boy
In college, and a woman blackmailed you —
A low, crude matter. I had settled it
Swiftly, if you had let me. We alone,
We three, on Harvard Bridge — night — and beneath,
A practicable river: ah, it was
A child's task! But you faltered. . . . You recall,
Possibly.

FAUST

I recall. . . . So you are he.
I did not know you.

SATAN

Let 's forget the past.
We meet now under happier auspices.

FAUST

Incredible.

SATAN

No, quite an honest fact
Am I.

FAUST

I hardly can persuade myself
Whether to laugh or pull a solemn face
At seeing you. It is preposterous!
I thought that you were dead — a myth — a wraith.

SATAN

Dead? That is rich!

FAUST

Well . . . don't you think yourself
A slight anachronism?

SATAN

My young friend,
I am no laughing matter. With the times
I, too, have changed, and am as up-to-date
As the Ritz-Carlton.

FAUST

But your horns and tail
And pitchfork? Not a vestige do I see
Of your famed look! You have no frightful glance;
I cannot even so far flatter you
As to say special badness makes your face

Great and distinguished. If you 're Prince of Hell,
How villanously have the poets lied!

SATAN

They have lied, always, horribly, of me!
I am not half so black as they allege.
You know, exaggeration is to them
What whiskey is to most men. But time bursts
Their bubbles — or at least we come to take
Their work as merely art. Thus their description
As art is not so bad; but if you seek
For truth, it 's outright libel.

FAUST

I admit
It has a certain perfectness of evil
Lacking in you.

SATAN

Surely to-day we know
That nothing is so wholly good or bad
As our forefathers thought: not black and white,
But gray, predominates. Well, I am gray,
Possibly. I was never black; and age
Has made me stouter, and with gentle warmth
Ripened my virtues; and, even though I say it,
You will not find me a bad sort to meet
If you will but be fair, and put aside
Your ancient and poetic prejudice.

FAUST

Well spoken! And well met! Come, have a drink.
You are the most diverting visitor
I 've had in many a day. Bourbon or Scotch?

SATAN

A very little Scotch. That 's plenty, thanks.
It 's very seldom those who summon me

Would give, not take. And did you send for me
Only to have a drink?

FAUST

I sent for you?

SATAN

Did you not summon me?

FAUST

Why, no —

SATAN

Ah, well!
It 's my mistake; wires get crossed sometimes.
I hope I 've not intruded.

FAUST

Not at all.
Delighted to have met you.

SATAN

I regret
That I have bothered you. I have enjoyed,
However, your kind hospitality.
To make amends to you, before I go,
I should be glad to do you any service
Within my power.

FAUST

I thank you; but I think
That there is nothing in your special line
That I have need of.

SATAN

Are you really, then,
A man contented?

FAUST

I would hardly go
As far as that! . . . I only meant to say

My needs, my troubles, are not of such kind
As you could remedy.

SATAN

Now, there again
You take the poets' word for me — those low
And scurvy fellows who lump all their spleen
And call the mess my portrait! But in fact,
I am more versatile, more broad, more kind
Than they conceive. I venture to believe
That I could aid you.

FAUST

All the fiends in Hell
Lack devilry enough.

SATAN

If you would speak
The symptoms of your trouble, I at least
Could give you friendly counsel for your needs. . . .
Oh, I am deeply learned!

FAUST

And besides,
A most accomplished mocker! . . . My complaint
Is quite beyond your counsel. Why, I tell you,
I have examined, tried, experienced
The passions and the aims of mortal life
With the grave thoroughness and good intent
That mark a doctor of philosophy
Writing his thesis. And my careful search
Of life has brought me one great verity:
I do not like it! No, I do not like
Anything in it: birth, death, all that lies
Between — I find inadequate, incomplete,
Offensive. So you see me sitting here,
Instead of talking politics in the streets,

Or weeping at the opera, or agog
At a cotillon. For the savor 's gone
From these, as parts of an unsavored whole.
I simply have, with reason and sound thought,
Convinced myself that only fools attain
Their hope on earth — in a fools' paradise
That does not interest me. . . . Now, could you treat
This case, good Mr. Satan?

SATAN

In my day,
I have relieved far sicker men than you,
My dear friend Faust. And yet I would not say
Even for a moment that your case is not
A grave one: not so much the case itself,
As what might spring from it. In such a mood,
Men sometimes have done mad and foolish things
With consequences sad to view. Some minds,
Reaching your state, and finding life a bane,
Decide within themselves that naught can be
Worse than the present world, and then set out
To revolutionize, rend, whirl, uproot
The world's foundations. And the mess they make
Is pitiful to contemplate! Such sweet
And beautiful souls as I have seen go wrong
Along this path: Shelley — he had your eyes;
And Christ — but I 'll not talk theology.
Besides, his churches almost have made good
His personal havoc. . . .

FAUST

That is not my line.

SATAN

No, no, you keep your head! Now let me see. . . .
A temporary sedative you require

To bridge the dangerous moment. I suggest
A little course that old Saint Anthony,
Epicure though he was, would grant as rare
And finely chosen: careless days and nights —
Delicious gayeties — the Bacchic bowl —
Exquisite company from whom some two
Or three, with golden or with auburn hair,
A man of taste might choose to solace him
In sunlight or in starlight — while the lure
Of subtle secrets in those yielding breasts
Spice the preceding revelries. . . .

FAUST

Go tell
That tale to college boys, whose lonely dreams
Have shaped Iseult of Ireland, Helen of Troy,
As end of heart's desire — and, lacking these,
Clasp chorus-Aphrodites. But I know
That from the topmost peak of ecstasy
Falls a straight precipice; half-times the foot
Misses the peak — but never mortal step
Has missed the gulf beyond it. And I see
Where, in night's gorgeous dome, to-morrow waits
With cold insistence. Me you cannot lure
With this poor opiate. And I beg of you
Not needlessly to tax your mental powers
By now suggesting the delights of drink:
I know them; and they give me headaches.

SATAN

Ah,
How crude you think me!

FAUST

No, I think you human.
We all are that sometimes.

SATAN

You have not grasped
All that I meant. I know the calfish joys
Of the young freshman, suddenly let loose
With chorus-girls for nursemaids, are not yours.
I mean far subtler things: I mean the play
Of the wise soul that sees the abyss of life —
Sees the grim measure of the mortal doom —
And over that dark gulf in reckless mirth
Dances on rainbows, with delightful arms
And bosoms close to his. That is a mood
That always thrills me with a sense of large
And splendid courage. If I did not think
That it would bore you, I should like to make
My meaning clear by reading a few lines
That I once wrote when I myself was in
Your very mood — Or would you care to hear
My little poem?

FAUST

What! Is even the Devil
A poet nowadays?

SATAN

Indeed he is:
And not a bad one. Once I would have scorned
The poets; but we moderns so surpass
The ancients here that I am proud to write
Some verses now and then. For we have learned
That poetry, like all the other arts,
Is pure technique: the mere ideas are nothing,
The form is everything. That ennobles us
And makes us artists. And as artist, I
Am not contemptible, as you may see
From this slight sample. With your leave, I 'll read.

(*Satan produces an enormous scrap-book of magazine-clippings, turns over the pages and at last begins to read*)

A Watteau Melody

Oh, let me take your lily hand,
And where the secret star-beams shine
Draw near, to see and understand
Pierrot and Columbine.

Around the fountains, in the dew,
Where afternoon melts into night,
With gracious mirth their gracious crew
Entice the shy birds of delight.

Of motley dress and maskèd face,
Of sparkling unrevealing eyes,
They track in gentle aimless chase
The moment as it flies.

Their delicate beribboned rout,
Gallant and fair, of light intent,
Weaves through the shadows in and out
With infinite artful merriment.

. . . . . .

Dear lady of the lily hand —
Do then our stars so clearly shine
That we, who do not understand,
May mock Pierrot and Columbine?

Beyond this garden-grove I see
The wise, the noble, and the brave
In ultimate futility
Go down into the grave.

And all they dreamed and all they sought,
Crumbled and ashen grown, departs;
And is as if they had not wrought
These works with blood from out their hearts.

The nations fall, the faiths decay,
The great philosophies go by —
And life lies bare, some bitter day,
A charnel that affronts the sky.

The wise, the noble, and the brave —
They saw and solved — as we must see
And solve — the universal grave,
The ultimate futility.

. . . . . .

Look — where beside the garden-pool
A Venus rises in the grove,
More suave, more debonair, more cool
Than ever burned with Paphian love.

'T was here the delicate ribboned rout
Of gallants and the fair ones went
Among the shadows in and out
With infinite artful merriment.

Then let me take your lily hand,
And let us tread, where star-beams shine,
A dance; and be, and understand
Pierrot and Columbine.

FAUST

Splendid! Delightful!

SATAN

You are flattering me.
How did you like it, really?

FAUST

Well, as art
I think it splendid; as philosophy,
I hardly praise it. 'T is a mood that comes
And has its will of us in its own hours —
Yes, irresistibly. But past the hour
Wait graver judges. I decline to be,
As you suggest delightfully, a fly
On the spoiled beer of life. Nor do I lean
Toward your ingenious blending of despair,
Satiety, and child's-play.

SATAN

Those who take
This attitude, however, swiftly grow
The darlings of existence — souls that sip
Of every flower the nectar, and are bound
Unto no laws or standards, but move free,
Viewing all things as relative. . . . And yet
Your special temperament may not prefer
Nectar. Those lines of sternness round your mouth
Convince me you are right; another cure
Better befits you. And a mighty one
I set before you, which has ever served
As lodestar for all high and glorious minds,
All kings of earth, all potentates of thought,
All great achievers. Power I offer you —
The one chief prize that all men have desired
And shall desire forever.

FAUST

Now you grow
Rather more interesting. What do you mean?
A crown and sceptre and a thousand slaves
To serve me?

SATAN

Do not jest. I offer you
The one sole reservoir where power to-day
Lies stored in sleeping cataracts. At noon
Come with me into Wall Street; take your stand;
Buy, sell, as I direct you; and one hour
Shall make you richer than you ever dreamed
In madness of desire. For three days more
Come there each noon again; at end of these,
If you have done my bidding, you shall be
Master of the finances of the world,
Despot of nations, unto whom the kings
And captains of the earth shall kneel to crave
Crumbs from the table. Then let pen and sword
Forget their quarrel for supremacy;
Since you can buy them both, or starve them both,
Or cast them to the wilderness! Such power
I offer as would make the pulses beat
Even of a skeleton!

FAUST

But not a soul
Grown sceptical of life. Power? Power? For what?
And over what? And toward what? Not a power
Over myself or pain or loneliness
Or ignorance or evil; not a strength
To bid the near-world cease, and in its place
Instate my visions beautiful and pale,
Nearer the heart's desire. No, you would give
Power to direct the miseries of men,
But not to stay them: power to hold the world
As some cold robber-baron from his rocks
Once held his little valley: power to sit
In ultimate seclusion, and look down

On streets and mines and workshops with the sense
That I was fountain of the miseries
Dark in them all. I thank you; but I think
I should derive small sport from such a game.
You see, I am not Satan.

SATAN

Well, you are
A subtle one, a shrewd one! On my word,
I hardly had suspected you so deep.
What time I have been wasting! Mr. Faust,
At last I know you for a prince of men —
A brilliant mind, a high intelligence,
A spirit incorruptible. The trash,
Baubles and claptrap which the foolish herd
Snatch at, you scoff — and rightly. I will not
With one more word of it insult your mind
That admirably penetrates to deeps
Where I, too, love to dwell. I put aside
All trivialities, and frankly say
That I can offer you one ultimate gift
Fit even for you — a subtle paradise
Such as not Hercules mid Western Isles
Found in the Garden of Hesperides.
It is a paradise of secret peace,
A glorious land of amaranthine bloom;
Where happiness, having fled the world, now dwells
In shining gladness. Guarded, deep, sublime
With lights and shadows, lies it: there have hearts
The weariest and the greatest of mankind
Found perfect refuge and abiding-place
For time and for eternity. To few
Its gates are open: it I promise you
If you but trust me!

FAUST

But why should I trust you?
If history speaks true, you have deceived
All who, since Eve, have put their faith in you.
Further, your paradise could hardly have
Joys in it worth the grasping, to my taste.
So pardon me if frankly I admit
I doubt your promise.

SATAN

Ah, you are wholly wrong!
I am quite honest with you, now having learned
Your true capacity.

FAUST

Perhaps, perhaps.
And yet I must decline.

SATAN

You doubt me still.
But I will prove my utter honesty
Beyond contention. In my deepest soul,
I know this paradise will serve your need;
And to make plain to you my fair intent,
I offer you a bargain whose clear terms
Must drive your doubts away. I am prepared
To pledge myself to be your abject slave
And servant for all time if you yourself
Do not acknowledge that my paradise
Delights you wholly!

FAUST

Well! That *is* an offer!

SATAN

What could be fairer? You yourself shall judge;
And you risk nothing. Ah, your look still doubts!

You have in mind those libellous poets' tales
Of bonds inscribed in blood which I exact
In payment, and destroy men's souls! My friend,
Have I yet asked you for a bond of blood?
And if I ever do, I give you leave
To wring my neck unceremoniously.

FAUST

Well, for the life of me, I cannot read you!
Yet let me ask: why such an eager will
To serve a man into whose rooms you came
By chance to-night? Why give yourself such pains
To furnish him a paradise?

SATAN

There is
No mystery in that. I would ally
You to myself.

FAUST

Thanks, I decline.

SATAN

You fail
To understand me. For I ask not this
As promise of you.

FAUST

What, then, do you mean?
What do you count on? Whence do you expect
Pay for your trouble and your risk — a risk
Not trivial, I warn you?

SATAN

Let me make
The matter clear to you. I know quite well
The risk is nothing, since my paradise
Will utterly delight you. Granting this,

You see my profit: you will stay with me
Willingly there forever, to my ends
An interested assistant. I will serve
Forth on my tables such delicious fare
That you will freely choose to be my guest
Through time and through eternity. I say:
Fie for a bond written in scrawly blood!
A bond of choice is better. Could a saint
Speak fairer to you? I risk everything,
And you risk nothing but a little time;
And time, as you are placed, seems not so dear
That you need hoard it.

FAUST

But your ends are — what?

SATAN

How can it matter now — if seeing them.
You shall approve them?

FAUST

Are you serious?

SATAN

My jests have other aspect.

FAUST

I accept.
Your game is to my taste. For thirty years
Have I made search through all the lands of earth,
The realms of learning, and the tangled groves
Of fancy, for some region which my soul
Might with entire approval view; but none
Has been vouchsafed me. If the Devil can
In this surpass the world's established powers,
Then I am his disciple willingly. . . .
But if you fail, friend Satan! — I shall tie
You to a cart's tail and exhibit you

Like a dead whale throughout the country — or
Make you curator of an orphanage!

SATAN

I shall not fail.

OLDHAM (*enters*)

I beg your pardon, Faust;
I thought you 'd be alone. My brother left,
Not waiting for me; and, as I passed by,
I saw your lights, and thought I would look in
Just for a moment. I had things to say
That are perhaps much better left unsaid.
Good-bye, my dear friend. I will not disturb you.
Good night again.

FAUST

Wait, Oldham; do not go.
I have a visitor whose name you know,
But not, perhaps, his person. Let me have
The pleasure of presenting you. This is
The Devil — Mr. Oldham.

OLDHAM

You are mad!
What jest is this?

SATAN

I am indeed the Devil.
Look in my eyes intently. . . . Shall I tell you
Your thought, two minutes since? . . . Or what you hold
Clutched now against your side? . . . *Or where you go*
When you go hence to-night? . . .

OLDHAM

No! . . . I believe you. . . .
Although it is incredible! . . .

FAUST

You come
Just at the proper moment for good-bye,
For I am going with him on a journey,
And do not know how soon I shall return.
If I return at all.

OLDHAM

A journey? Where?

SATAN

To paradise.

FAUST

He offers paradise
That will suffice my wish, and gives himself
As pledge of his success.

SATAN

Come, we must haste,
For it is very far.

FAUST

To paradise! . . .

OLDHAM

To paradise. . . . Take me with you!

FAUST

My friend,
It is not possible. I do foresee
Some perils to whose touch I would subject
None save myself.

OLDHAM

And what care I for them!
Faust — on my word, when I climbed up your stair
This second time, it was to say good-bye
To you forever, being quite resolved
To end my choking loneliness and loathing
With a quick shot to-night. Take me, or I

Shall carry out my purpose. What care I
Whither you go, or what the perils be?
I would go with you into Hell!

SATAN

We go
To paradise. What is this Hell you name?

CURTAIN

THE SECOND ACT

The scene is the stone-paved courtyard of a ruined temple. In the centre lies a square pool, with wide rows of steps leading down to the water, now overgrown with lotus plants. Around the court rise long colonnades of pillars with grotesquely carven bases and capitals of luxuriant design. Beyond these appear green masses of dense tropical foliage, in which an occasional brilliant flower shines.

Faust, Satan and Oldham, all wearing white tropical dress and sun-helmets, are seated on fragments of fallen columns in front of the pool. Luncheon is spread before them. Oldham is lighting a cigarette; Faust is just finishing his meal; Satan is leaning back, contemplating the surrounding jungle. Two dark-skinned servants, wearing white robes and turbans, are beginning to bear away the repast.

OLDHAM

One's blood beats fuller in these tropic lands.
Last night, as we were dining, where the beach
With its plumed palm-trees sloped to meet the sea,
And the white foam along the glassy waves
Played in the evening light — I half believe
I could have written love-songs. But to whom —
That were a problem!

FAUST

Yes, one's brain is lit
With fire beneath this sun. At night, the glow

Is magical; but at this height of day,
When all the branches and the flowers and rocks
And the far glimmering rivers shake and writhe
In the fierce blaze, I feel a hideous touch
Of madness in it.

SATAN

Keep you to the shade!
This is the pinnacle, the very noon
Of summer in these lands. One hour of sun
Unshaded — and poor Oldham and poor I
Might have a maniac or a corpse as guest.

OLDHAM

I am not sure that I would help you with him.
I might be elsewhere occupied. Last night
I entertained myself with imaging
A project which, if I adopted it,
Would preëngage me.

SATAN

With a single guess,
I 'll tell you what it was.

OLDHAM

I give you twenty.

SATAN

You thought perhaps it would be nice to be
The white bull we saw yesterday, and eat
Without reproof from every vender's stall
Throughout the whole bazar; and you intend
Thus to disguise yourself, and try the sport.

OLDHAM

You hit it nearer than I thought you would!
'T was something like that. I was wondering
If, in this marvellous and lazy clime,
It were not possible for one to take

Twenty young beauties and a hundred slaves —
Retire to some secluded isle of palms —
And live without a thought, a wish, a hope,
Drugged with the warmth, the languor and the light.

FAUST

Possible? — For a rabbit! Not for you.

SATAN

I am afraid you 'd find it wearisome.
Some like it; but not your kind.

FAUST

In this heat
Even he grows crazy; and we, Satan, turn
Unsympathetic creatures. Whew, this blaze
Is getting worse! Can't we move on?

SATAN

We go
No farther.

FAUST

Lovely residence!

SATAN

It is here
That our long journey terminates, my friends.
Upon this spot I trust, if all goes well,
To give your long-tried patience recompense.

FAUST

Recompense? I am sceptical of it!
But we deserve this. None but idiots
Would have come with you to this boiling land
On a wild-goose chase; on each step of which
One gets a fleeting panoramic view
Of kinds of misery one did not guess
Existed in the world. Those lepers, beggars,
Cripples, fanatics, reptiles — all the swarms

Of loathsome creatures we have passed — will haunt
My dreams forever with new vivid masks
Of nightmare. Recompense? There is n't any!

SATAN

Await the event. You shall have recompense.

OLDHAM

Satan, what is your meaning? What event
Do you await here? You have been to us,
Through our long journey, secretive and close
Of all your purposes — from day to day
Giving no hint of your to-morrow's plan
Nor of our destination. Now, I think,
Silence is not a virtue. Have we come
In fact to our last halt?

SATAN

This is the spot
Toward which our course unswervingly has aimed
Since the first day. This vast and ruined shrine,
Built in forgotten times to unknown gods,
And now in timeless solitude enfolded,
Has long been known to me. Here, in retreat
From the world's noises, dwells a holy man,
A wonder-worker of unfathomed power,
Now long forgotten by the troubled world
Except me only. 'T is his aged hand
Shall open to you those celestial gates
We come to enter.

FAUST

Ah, a wonder-worker!
Perhaps he will perform the mango trick,
Or the rope-climbing, or the boy-in-the-basket?
The jugglers here have been below report
One hears of them.

SATAN

Put by your idle sneers.
He is a prophet and a saint whose like
The world can offer not. Upon his face
You shall behold such utter holiness,
Such sublimate devotion as shall shake
Your hearts' foundations.

FAUST

Well, I can endure
The meeting if he can.

OLDHAM

Satan, you choose
Sometimes strange company. You often speak
Of friendship with such men of holiness
As much surprises me.

SATAN

If you were but
A little wiser, you would understand
That I have taught them much, at various times,
That is of profit to them.

FAUST

Pray teach me
A little something also.

SATAN

No, you think
You know too much already. . . . Furthermore,
You do not trust me; and I will not teach
One who keeps restlessly, the whole day long,
His eyes upon me, as though fearful I
Were waiting to spring on him unawares!

FAUST

Oh, you exaggerate.

OLDHAM

Look through yonder palms!
Someone is coming.

SATAN

He sees us! It is he!

[*Through the colonnade along the far side of the courtyard, there enters the Holy One, an aged man of venerable and sublime appearance, clad in a simple white robe. In his hand is a large copper bowl, which he carries with some care.*

SATAN

He brings a bowl of water from the spring —
The very bowl I gave him!

OLDHAM

What a face!
What light, what soundless calm!

FAUST

He is, indeed,
One of the ancient prophets. . . .

SATAN

Holy One!
Satan salutes you!

THE HOLY ONE

Satan — come again
After so long? A little longer — then
No carcass of illusion here shall wait
To greet you.

SATAN

In the greatness of the sea
All waves find home. . . .

THE HOLY ONE

Yea, verily; and the deep
Lies not far off. I am drawn nearer it

Since last you came: I see its floods more clear,
It laves me daily. . . . But what brings you back
To my deserted dwelling from the press
Where you are ever going to and fro
Upon the earth?

SATAN

I came to seek for you,
Whose feet are on the path of blessedness.

THE HOLY ONE

Ah, has illusion rent itself in twain
For your sight also?

SATAN

Ask me not. I come
Not on my mission, but on theirs. . . .

THE HOLY ONE

On theirs!
And who are your companions?

SATAN

Friends, who seek
What you have found.

THE HOLY ONE

They have not in their eyes
Wholly the look of Seekers. Passion lurks
Along their ruddy lips. . . . And yet, who knows?

FAUST

I offer you our greetings, reverend sir.
A long way have we come to meet with you,
By Satan led.

THE HOLY ONE

And what would you with me?

FAUST

Paradise! Paradise!

THE HOLY ONE

Too hotly spoken!
Go, get you to the dancers of Tanjore. . . .
Paradise!

OLDHAM

You belie us, Faust. Let me
Have speech with him.

Most Holy One, we come
From lands far off, beyond remotest seas
Of sunset. There, in midst of toil and stress
And clamor, have we dwelt, till weariness
Of all life's gifts impelled us to go forth
To seek if anywhere a region lay
Where happiness still dwelt. To you we turn
As unto one upon whose face is set
The seal of peace such as we dreamed not of.

SATAN

They seek the Way, the Way, most Holy One.

THE HOLY ONE

The Blessed Eightfold Way lies free to all.
I cannot ope it to them. Peace, joy, bliss,
Supernal glory is it to those souls
Who have put by the follies of their birth
And sought its refuge. But though now I stand
With lighted heart upon its blissful path,
I can stretch out no hand to grasp their hands
And draw them toward it.

SATAN

Yet the Blessed One,
In Gaya first enlightened, far and wide
Taught men the Way. . . .

THE HOLY ONE

Aye, verily. . . . Some mood
Of evil in my heart has closed my mouth
And darkened thus my eyesight. But 't is gone. . . .
Brethren, have comfort on my frugal stones.
Ask me all ye desire.

SATAN

Most Holy One,
These are my friends; I bring them in sore need
Unto your wisdom. For methinks they stand
Now at the cross-roads where the choice is made
Of truth or vanity. I beg you, tell
Unto their ears how, in your day, you came
To that dark crossing.

THE HOLY ONE

I would do your will
In this, and in all other services,
My brethren.

You must know that in my youth
I was a lusty noble of the realm
Of Jeypore; and the falcon and the sword
And the nautch-dancers and the palace-girls
Were mine to love and master like a lord.
Lordlike I lived; the caskets of the day
And of the night I crowded with bright jewels
Of love and joy and laughter. No desire
Panted unslaked an instant at my doors —
Nay, feasts were spread for it. And poor men gazed
On me with envy, muttering from their dust:
"Behold, the Heavens' darling." . . .

OLDHAM

Other lands
Know the same tale.

THE HOLY ONE

Aye, aye, all lands. And then
One night, alone in mine own garden walls,
Beneath the piercing stars, I gathered my life
Into my hands, and looked at it, and far
Beyond it at all other mortal lives;
And dust fell from mine eyelids. . . .

For I saw
Birth and desire, satiety and pain,
Recurrent yearning that is never stilled,
Agony, death, rebirth in other forms,
And agony, and desire, and agony.
But nowhere saw I happiness or peace
Or rest from cravings that like vultures tear
The fibres of the heart.

Then wandered I
Forth from my palaces in utter pain,
Seeing the world as dust and vanity,
A desert of despair, a raging sea
Of torment. . . .

SATAN

Now why stops the Holy One?

THE HOLY ONE

It wearies me to speak, and to recall
Those perished years. . . . Give me to drink.

OLDHAM

He speaks
Out of familiar deeps. Seas sunder us,
But the same stars have cast their ghostly rays
Into our bosoms.

FAUST

And those cloudless eyes
Have seen what we have seen!

THE HOLY ONE

I am refreshed. . . .
Thus long ago, in my most desolate hour,
I was refreshed by draughts from the deep springs
Of light. Beneath a pipal tree I sat
In lost despair; and thither to me came
A pilgrim; and he glanced into mine eyes
With sight that read the sickness of my soul,
And sat beside me, and in measured words
Like far-off song told me this parable:

The Buddha came to where the sea
Curled silver-white upon the land,
And murmurs of infinity
Breathed on the sand.

And there lay shells like rosy foam
Borne from the caverns of the deep,
Frail playthings drifted from the home
Of timeless, tideless sleep.

And on the sand a Fisher stood,
Drying his nets that late had seen
The silent caverns of the flood
And all the wastes between.

The Fisher lingered in his place
With countenance of mild surprise,
And looked upon the Buddha's face
With dumb, uncomprehending eyes.

And Buddha spake: "Thy nets are drawn,
Thy boat rocks idle on the sea,
Thy day turns westward, and is gone. . . .
Come thou with me."

The Fisher marvelled: "I must toil
With nets and shells among the caves,
To win the sea's unwilling spoil
From the harsh waves."

And Buddha answered: "Cast no more
Thy nets upon the troubled sea,
Nor gather shells along the shore.
Come thou with me.

"Thou drawest shells and curious flowers
From out the blue untrodden caves.
Thou seest the passing of the hours.
Thou hearest the clamor of the waves.

"Thou openest the shell where lies
The pearl more white than driven spray —
And trackless past thy vision flies
Each passing day.

"But I will teach thee not to stir
The shell nor flower in its sleep.
For thou shalt roam the sepulchre
That chasms all their native deep.

"And vain desire, like terror grown
Deep in the chambers of thy breast,
Shall be from thee forever flown,
And thou shalt rest.

"No search for pearls shall blind thy thought,
Nor waves, with clamorous harmonies.
But in the silence where is naught
Thou shalt behold the One that is.

"And where the days now speed like foam
Across thy vision, there shall be
For thee a vast eternal home —
An Infinite Sea."

The Fisher looked on Buddha dumb —
Looked deep into that tender gaze —
Those eyes within whose depths had come
And gone the sorrows of all days.

He looked uncomprehendingly,
And wearily he shook his head;
And turned once more to drag the sea,
Knowing not what the Buddha said.

FAUST
The cup again! The Holy One is faint.
OLDHAM
He speaks a miracle! . . .
THE HOLY ONE
And then I knew
That pilgrim as a saint, whose lips revealed
The glory of the Buddha. I beheld
My life one poisoned network of desire
And fleshly longing and pain-sowing hope —
The evil self seeking its happiness
And shaping horror. And I cast away
Myself, and cried: What am I but a dream,

A wave within the sea, a passing cloud
Upon the radiance of eternity?
All yearning will I slay, and slay therewith
The sorrow that succeeds it! . . .

So the lust
Of life passed from me; so the narrow I
Merged in the infinite, from hope set free —
Heritor of Nirvana's holy calm,
Wherein the voices of the heart's unrest
Are stifled, and the soul expands to clasp
Joy, nothingness, eternity and peace.

FAUST

Peace. . . . Peace. . . . Like bells from upland monasteries
You speak the word that summons us. But where
In peace is room for all once-towering hopes —
Nay, even for the wrecked and prostrate monoliths
That mark those fallen pylons?

THE HOLY ONE

Let the earth,
Ravenous of her young, these too devour,
And dust and nothingness engulf their shapes —
Vain burdens, bitter monuments.

FAUST

And where
Shall I find deeps wherein without a sound
I can extinguish my wild will that leaps
Flamelike to meet the stars?

THE HOLY ONE

In that deep sea
Hid in thy breast. Seek thou that tide of calm,
For it lies there awaiting.

FAUST

Can it be
That life's whole burden may be cast aside
And named as nothing, and its memory
Perish forever? In the summer nights,
Comes there no stealing ecstasy to stir
The old forgotten longings?

THE HOLY ONE

In the night
And in the day, one ecstasy abides
Ceaselessly with the heart that has put off
Desire — one ecstasy of final calm.
All other voices seem harsh clamorings.

OLDHAM

Ah, Holy One, lead me thy way of peace!
For I am weary of my heart's vain wars.
My life is as a desert, where desire
Corrodes me ceaselessly. Instruct my soul
To follow thee home to the gulfs of rest!
That, in renouncement of this bitter will,
It find at last deliverance it has sought.

THE HOLY ONE

My son, thou hast spoken; thou shalt come in time
To that abode. The Buddha's light shall guide
Both thee and me, poor seekers. Bide with me;
And what I know, that shalt thou freely know,
And my peace shall be thy peace. . . .

SATAN

Faust, the gates
Admit one form already.

FAUST

Ah, the gates
Are pearl and silver. . . . Would that there were space

Within them for such fevered heart as mine —
That with the restlessness of stormy winds
Beats on its barriers!

THE HOLY ONE

There is room for all
Whose souls renounce the world and life and hope
To gain that soundless silence.

OLDHAM

Faust, I feel,
Transfused with light and glory, that deep peace
Awaiting. There shall perish like a flame
The passions which have seared my tortured soul
All my life long. They die; and nothingness
Like a cool flood sweeps over me. Ah, come
Where never storm shall smite!

FAUST

I see the gates;
I see the cool breast of the silvery flood
Of refuge and oblivion. . . . Fare you well,
Oldham, and light go with you! For I go,
Alas, not with you. . . .

OLDHAM

Faust, Faust, turn not back!
I, who am casting all desires in dust,
To one desire still cling: I long that joy
Of such deliverance fill you as fills me
On this first step of the sublime ascent.

FAUST

I see the light that waits you on the peak;
And my heart follows you. But my stern soul
Plucks me yet back with cold insistency
I cannot master. . . . Go! If I could pray,
My prayers should follow you. My visions shall;

My love shall fold you. But I cannot come
Where you shall go; I cannot cast aside
All that I surely know — this pitiful
And shattered mortal life, with its strange gleams
And shadows — and embrace the icy void
Where Being trembles on the final verge.
To bid life cease — but linger as the moon
Lingers in heaven — ah, that is horrible
Beyond life's proper horrors! . . . Were my pain
A single atom greater — were my soul
A single breath more weary — I would come.
But now I must confront the winds of heaven
Still master of my destinies. . . . To the last,
Not in such tomb-world can my spirit rest.
No golden clouds that throng Nirvana's gates
Shall tempt me there to enter and resign
My right to strain beyond all gates that be. . . .
But you I cannot counsel. . . .

OLDHAM

Me the peace
Already laps with wavelets of the flood.

FAUST

The flood is sundering us.

OLDHAM

Farewell, farewell,
Belovèd friend. I with the Holy One
Henceforth am linked; and grief shall follow me
In what should be your footsteps.

FAUST

Have no grief.
In the vast deeps of life's salt bitter sea
Perhaps awaits my anodyne, to heal
Life's wounds. . . .

OLDHAM

Farewell! I go to paradise.

[*Oldham and the Holy One move slowly away together, pass through the colonnades, and disappear into the forest. Faust follows with his eyes their retreating figures.*

SATAN

You do not know a paradise when you see it!
Some day, when I have time, I 'll start a school
To give instruction to great minds like you —
Débutant!

FAUST

Ah, I had forgotten you. . . .
Two men are worth a thousand devils still.

SATAN

I overrated you. Now get you gone
Before I call the savagery that sleeps
Here in the jungle to annihilate you
For your unparalleled stupidity.

FAUST

Stupidity or no, I have one word
Still to say to you, my malicious friend:
To heel!

SATAN

What!

FAUST

Aye, to heel, I say! Crouch down
And follow me, my hound and servitor
From this hour forth!

SATAN

You have grown very witty.
Your wit, however, does not please me.

FAUST

Please you!
There are few things that I desire less.
To heel!

SATAN

What fiends possess you? Ah, I see!
You are still thinking of that wager made,
That jest of ours.

FAUST

I am still thinking of it.

SATAN

You do not mean that now you wish to claim
That forfeit seriously?

FAUST

I mean quite that.

SATAN

What an amazing man you really are!
For your own sake, I tried to offer you
A splendid paradise; I brought you here
At infinite cost and trouble; you have had
An hour of insight and experience
New and instructive to you; your best friend
Has found eternal bliss: and now you turn,
And just because your uttermost crazy whim
Is not quite satisfied with what he grasped
Thankfully, you revert, with sorry taste,
To my old careless generous remarks.
I do not think your friends at home would call it
A sporting attitude.

FAUST

The jungle shakes —
Do you not hear it? — with the stifled, choked
Laughter of leopards, elephants, hyenas,

Rhinoceroses, apes, pythons, and tigers,
Who hear you and are overcome with mirth. . . .
I also laugh with them.

SATAN

Magnanimous
Your laughter sounds! True, you have beaten me,
And I am at your mercy. By some whim,
Trick, technicality, your mind rejects
A noble paradise; and to my pledge
You therefore are entitled. And I stand
Ready to pay it.

FAUST

Ah, at last we have
Acknowledgment of it! Frankness is good
Even for the Devil, Satan.

SATAN

I have been
Frank with you always. And, if to your taste,
I will be franker still. Your stake is won;
You have your triumph: but does it quite fill
The chambers of your heart? Will it suffice
In place of that bright paradise you dreamed
Might be your gain as loser? Ah, my friend,
In copper you have won, but lost in gold!
And victory will not requite for that
Your empty treasury.

FAUST

Not empty quite;
You are too modest.

SATAN

Oh, if you choose, my pledge
Shall be fulfilled, and I will be your dog —
Snarling a little, sometimes — snapping at

Your friends and furniture and lady-loves —
But yet your dog. However, I can do
Better for you than that. . . .

FAUST

Enough! Enough!

SATAN

But hear me! You 'll admit, a feather's weight,
A hair's breadth only held you from the gates
That Oldham entered. Almost they sufficed
Your spirit; yes, a moth's wing could have blown
You toward them! 'T was so nearly I fulfilled
All that I promised. Therefore when I speak,
You will, for justice's sake, concede I am
No absolute bungler, no coarse-palated
Plebeian, as to paradises.

FAUST

No.

I will admit that.

SATAN

Good! Now, I would make
One final offer to you.

Faust, I know
In other regions, beneath other skies,
One haven more, the only one of earth
That can be judged in glory to surpass
This paradise you entered not. My faith
Is absolute that it is to your need
Utterly moulded. Like your heart itself,
Its halls are structured, destinate for you
As perfect refuge. And I say to you:
Give me the leave, and I will lead you there
For one supreme and ultimate trial of choice

That has no doubtful outcome. And my pledge
Shall still be valid! If this refuge gives
Not all that you desire, you still may claim
My service as your slave. Thus do you risk
No atom, but have gain of one last chance
To win the paradise you hunger for!

FAUST

A pleasing logic; but I do not trust
The mind behind it.

SATAN

Trust it, or distrust —
What matter? — when the issue is so plain!

FAUST

Away! Away!

SATAN

Well, if this hope is vain
To urge you, let despair serve in its stead
As roweled spur. For see where now you stand:
The mock of destiny — the man who lost
All joys of the bright many that the world
Cherishes! Aye, and even lost his friend,
His one deep lasting friend — and stood thereafter
Fixed like a donkey. . . . Though I led you on
From paradise to paradise, and none
Sufficed you — that were surely better sport —
Testing and trying with sublime contempt —
Than finger-twirling! But not thus I lead.
For now you shall, you shall have paradise!

FAUST

Deep in my soul, there is a sense that loathes
Pacts with the Devil. Yet the sanctioned powers
Established in the world have proved them void
And ignorant of paradise. . . . Where lies it?

SATAN

Follow, and I will lead.

FAUST

A long path?

SATAN

Yes.

FAUST

On! But your bondage waits you at the end.

SATAN

Ah, jester, jester! . . . Come — give me your hand!

CURTAIN

THE THIRD ACT

The scene is the nave of a great cathedral. Two rows of many-shafted columns stretch back to where, in the far background, rises the elaborate magnificence of the High Altar.

The nave is empty, except for an occasional figure moving at the far end of the long central aisle, and an occasional attendant in sacerdotal robes making ready the Altar.

Faust, entering from the right, and Satan, entering from the left, meet in the foreground. Satan is dressed in the dark robes of a priest.

FAUST

I care not for your masquerade attire;
But let that pass. . . . Well, I have kept your hour.
And this perhaps is not unfitting place
To make confession that you weary me
A little. In this running to and fro
Over the earth, my inclination tires
Of your companionship. I am resolved,
If three days' time brings forth no new event,
To end this, and reclaim you to obey
My will.

SATAN

I am content; three days will serve.

FAUST

Good! Meanwhile, 't is at least some recompense
That we return from airy Eastern domes

Glittering in blank sunlight, unto lands
Where men erect their temples to the gods
In forms whose light and shadow, stress and play
Of arch and buttress, satisfies my blood
Better than does barbaric loveliness.
The dome that poises its clear perfect curves
Rising above the palm-trees, with the look
As of a wingèd bubble lightly resting
On needless masonry — that symbolled form
Of heavenly perfection never fills
My heart as do these knotted buttresses
And writhing ribs and vaults that strain in fight —
And are victorious, as they raise to heaven
The climbing spires of such an edifice.

SATAN

Quite right — but if you 'll let me interrupt —
There is a woman yonder who, I think,
Is waiting for a chance to speak to you.
She looks at you, and hesitates, and turns —
As though a little fearful to approach
So great a person.

FAUST

Where is she? I see.
I wonder if I know her.

SATAN

She is coming.

[*A young woman, hardly more than a girl, comes from between the pillars and approaches Faust. Satan withdraws a little as she approaches.*

THE WOMAN

I did not want to interrupt your talk;
But, Mr. Faust, I wished so much to speak
To you. You do not know me?

FAUST

Why, it seems . . .

THE WOMAN

Of course you do not; why should you remember?
But I have seen your face so many times
When you perhaps not noticed me at all,
That I feel half-acquainted. Mr. Brander
Speaks of you, too, so much that I have grown
To think I know you.

FAUST

Ah; yes, Brander. . . .

THE WOMAN

Still
I have not told you who I am, and you
Do not yet know me. I am Mrs. Brander.

FAUST

What! Mrs. Brander! Ah, delighted . . . yes. . . .

THE WOMAN

You had not heard that we were married?

FAUST

No.
Of course, I am astounded; it 's delightful —
And most surprising.

THE WOMAN

It was very sudden —
While you were gone.

FAUST

I see. Yes, I 'm surprised
And charmed. It 's strange, at first I could not bring
You to my memory.

THE WOMAN

I don't believe
That you can yet!

FAUST

Why. . . .

THE WOMAN

I don't wonder at it.
I used to whisk about and peer at you
As you came in. . . .

FAUST

Are you then . . . then are you . . .
Midge?

MIDGE

Yes! exactly.

FAUST

This is very charming.
Now I remember perfectly, of course,
Dear Mrs. Brander! I shall hope to see
Brander himself to-morrow. Give him, please,
My warmest wishes.

MIDGE

We shall hope to see you
In our apartment soon. It 's very tiny
And in a quite unfashionable street;
But it looks out across a bit of park
To westward, as I 've always hoped it would.
Some days the sunset lights are lovely there.
You must come look at them.

FAUST

Thank you — indeed
I shall be very glad to!

MIDGE

And I know —

How shall I say it? — that you 'll think me strange,
And that I cannot ever be your friend
As Mr. Brander is. I know so little —

FAUST

Dear Mrs. Brander!

MIDGE

But I am so eager
That you should give me just a little trial —
I want so much to know you, and so much
He should not lose you. . . .

FAUST

Why, you make me feel
Quite like a monster!

MIDGE

Then you 'll come?

FAUST

I 'll come!

MIDGE

Good-bye — and don't forget me.

[*Midge gives him her hand, and moves away smiling.*

FAUST

Well, of all
Impossible, grotesque, outrageous tricks
That Brander could have played upon himself!
Married — the fool, the fool! — And yet she is
Curiously sweet and fresh, that kitchen-maid.

SATAN

Are you quite through?

FAUST

Quite, thank you. . . . It is strange. . . .
But I forget; you are not interested.
What is it you would say now?

SATAN

I have things
Graver to speak of than admiring ladies
Or Gothic architecture. Here, to-day,
Unto your doubting eyes there shall be made
A revelation of profounder scope
Than aught that life has brought you.

FAUST

The hour strikes
Tardily; I am wearier than I was
When on this trial we entered.

SATAN

You have looked
Askance at me these many days, perplexed
To reconcile the fountains of my will
With my strange acts, and with the dark report
That you have heard concerning me. Dear friend,
Be you not angry, now I say to you
In full confession, that from day to day
I have deceived you: I have hid my face
Even from my friend: I have with doubtful mask
In alien guises tempted you, to try
Your metal. But the hour of trial is past;
The event is sure; and now I ope my heart
And show to you what few of living men
Have guessed — my final secret.

FAUST

Play no tricks
Before me, Satan; try no mumming game.
If you speak truth, let riddles cloak it not.

SATAN

Listen, and be truth's judge. I am not such
As men esteem me; and my spirit's springs

Rise not from buried and infernal realms,
But like your own, out of the fount of God
They have their being. I, though lowliest far,
Yet am a servant of the House of God —
Deputed to mine office by His hand,
And on His mission.

FAUST

You are trifling with me.

SATAN

I speak the gospel of the living God.

FAUST

Are you not Lord of Evil? God doubtless asks
That service of you?

SATAN

God is infinite,
Likewise His wisdom. His omniscience wills
That I go forth among the haunts of men
And offer evil to their touch. Thereby,
Some spurn me — and the force whereby they spurn
Lifts them up nearer to His arms. Some take
The sin I offer, fall from grace, go down —
And lost in fathomless gulfs of wickedness,
Cry out with utter yearning to His love
That it may save them, and repentant turn
Their prodigal faces toward His doors again,
Never to wander more. But some few souls,
Who neither spurn temptation nor repent
After their fall — these unregenerate
It is mine office wholly to destroy
And cleanse the universe for the praise of God.
Thus does all evil serve His mighty throne,
And all return to Him.

FAUST

I have no power
To take the measure of the words you speak.
Why tell me such things?

SATAN

I would tell you all
And show to you at last your destiny.
The vanities of the world, the woes and sins,
Are but the acid by whose fiery touch
I sort the gold from out the transient brass
And purify and fine it that it be
Worthy God's altar. My belovèd friend,
Such was your trial; thus have I tempted you
With things averse to God, with forms and faiths
Outcast and separate from Him. You have seen
The whole world's vanities; you have come to know
That in this world's illusion is no power
Whose love is refuge: even the living death
Of cold Nirvana frights you. Thus at last,
Knowing that you are powerless, and the world
Bare of salvation for your feebleness,
You stand on this great threshold; and your eyes
That see despair and loneliness shall raise
Their sight to heaven; and peace shall fold you round;
And God, who is our Father, shall be yours.

FAUST

This is not truth! My fevered eyes are weak
To look into this glowing maze of fire
With vision. All the ramparts of the world
Reel round me. I have scoffed God all my days,
Believing pain — your province of the world —
Proof of His non-existence. And you come

Crying His glory, testifying His faith,
Exhorting me to seek Him. . . . I am lost
Where naught is known to me.

SATAN

He is your hope,
Your sole salvation in a universe
Where never other form shall comfort you —
A waif except for Him. So have all souls —
The holy and the pure — from age to age
Learned, homesick for His home. Their frustrate hopes,
Their burdens heavier than by mortal strength
Can be sustained, their impotence, bow down
Each spirit: and it cries: "O God, support
My helplessness; unto Thy perfect will
Do I resign my vain and evil hopes,
My burdens; and Thy Will Be Done Forever."
Thus, with arms folded on despairing breast,
With head bowed to the inscrutable decree,
They seek Him: and a sudden glory fills
The humbled bosom; all His stars and thrones
Shine down upon it; all His majesty
Enters that lowly door, lifts up, sustains
The sundered soul; and His beneficence
With more than father-love enfolds the heart
Joined to His own forever. From His light
Reflected radiance pours; to the dark sight
Comes glimpse of the high justice of God's will;
And all roads lead to Heaven, and all hearts lie
Within His love, and all 's well with the world.

[*Deep organ music begins to roll through the arches of the cathedral. Candles are lighted one by one on the High Altar. Worshippers begin to enter the*

nave: they pass down the long central aisle and gather in groups at the far end, near the Altar. Faust stands leaning against a pillar, silent and lost in meditation.

Brander enters among the worshippers. He passes the spot where Faust is standing, glances at him and stops, astonished.

BRANDER

You have come back! I had not heard of it.
Where have you been these many months? I long
To talk with you.

FAUST

Yes, come and see me soon.
It 's a long story. . . . I congratulate you
Upon your marriage. . . .

BRANDER

Then you know. . . .

FAUST

She came
And spoke to me a little while ago.

BRANDER

It must seem strange to you beyond my power
Ever to quite unravel. But for me
All things are clear; and to my blinded sight
Morning has come — in this thing, as in all
The doubts that once enslaved me.

FAUST

Do you mean . . .

BRANDER

Come here aside before the service starts.
I owe it you to tell you. I have changed
In your long absence. . . .

FAUST

These are curious words.
I do not understand.

BRANDER

To understand,
You must hear all. You know my life — how vain
Its occupations, how absorbed I moved
In this day's folly and to-morrow's lure —
How petty trifles made my whole small round
Of being — selfish trifles, nothing worth,
Stained with a cruelty that I would forget.
That night we talked together — you and I
And Oldham — in your rooms, I wandered home
Sorely distressed. For you had stirred in me
A gnawing doubt whether the whole of life
Was not mere child's play.

FAUST

I am sorry if —

BRANDER

It was the kindest act man ever did
In all my life! I peered into my heart:
I saw myself Judas to innocence,
Betraying lightly with a careless kiss
A mortal body and immortal soul;
I saw no thing in all my days to claim
A sane man's approbation; one by one
Each glittering bauble that I late had loved
Crumbled to dust beneath the parching fire
Of reason. . . . And that night, I walked in Hell.

FAUST

Poor Brander! And my mocking did all this?

BRANDER

Thank God for it! That night I saw my joys

Like some rank thicket of bright vanities
Masking a precipice. A sense of sin
And loathing overcame me, and the power
Of utter terror filled me. I beheld
The evil riot of gross earthy things
That had o'ergrown me. Like a burden lay
That sense upon me, and it pressed me down
To a despondence deep beyond all words,
Beyond all thought. And no escape I saw
Except the bullet. . . .

FAUST

What a faith we pin
Upon that bullet!

BRANDER

Thus the doubtful days
Passed like a nightmare. Till, one Sabbath morn,
As restlessly I paced, some random mood
Led me to enter this cathedral's doors
At hour of service. As I knelt, with lips
Unknown to prayer, the mighty music rolled
Over my heart like an all-purging flood,
And a voice chanted: "He that loveth life
Shall lose it; he that hateth this world's life
Shall keep the life eternal." And a voice
Shortly thereafter sang, in angel tones:
"Come, let our feet return unto the Lord;
For He hath torn, and He will heal us." And
My soul cried: "Yield thy burdens to the Lord,
Upon His love cast thine unworthy self,
And bid His Will Be Done."

And then my soul
Melted as in the warmth of His embrace.

My guilt was gone like night before the sun:
Light blinded me; an infinite love and joy
Lifted me up, a child again, from earth
Into such regions as my mortal speech
Can never utter. And from that hour forth,
God has been with me. . . . Now you know my tale.

FAUST

You teach me more of marvels than I guessed
Was yet unlearned by me.

BRANDER

No words can teach
These marvels to a heart that has not known
God's glories.

FAUST

Then this mystery of the heart
Is what men mean when of the faith of God
They speak? I thought 't was dogma, service, prayer;
But this is life, is vision.

BRANDER

Aye, and more!
Now do I walk in meadows of calm light;
The love of God is over me; I faint
Almost beneath its sweetness and wild joy.
My whole heart's toil is how to merit it
Even a little.

SATAN (*raising his hand to bless*)

By the grace of God
You shall be worthy servant, O my son.

FAUST

This, then, is what God's vision-seers behold —
This revelation veiled unto mine eyes —

This love unfelt by me — this light of dawn
Beyond our darkened night. . . . I was too far
Estranged from Him, of too unworthy will,
Bowed by too sore a burden. . . .
[*The music of the organ rolls forth once more; and, at the far end of the nave, the choir takes up the music.*

VOICES SINGING

From the waters of Zion,
From the fountains of peace,
Pour the floods on whose bosom
Thy seeking shall cease.

There the winds of His garments
Shall lull thee to rest.
There the night of His watching
Shall enter thy breast.

Thou shalt sleep, and awaken;
On His morrow, to be
As a star in His heavens,
A wave in His sea.

FAUST

With old, profound, unutterable grief
My spirit speaks in me: as, many a time
In childhood, at the hour of evening dusk,
When all the room was still and shadowy,
I, at my mother's knee, wept out my heart
And knew not why I wept. And I am drawn
Out of myself upon the music's tide,
With nameless sorrowing, with childlike pain —

As though in careless play-hours of the day
I had done hurt to someone that I loved.
Ah, I am homesick; and in all the world
There is no knee at which I can weep out
My loneliness. There is no breast of peace
And silence and forgiveness for this child
In any dusk-strewn chamber. . . .

BRANDER

There is God!

FAUST

O God, can Thine arms fold me? Can my weight
Of loneliness and failure and despair
With the day's fruitage, find a child's release
In Thy great tenderness? I am a child;
And life's vast terrors gather round my soul;
And I am frightened. I am weary, Lord!
It darkens; and the storms creep on with night;
The shadows come; the wanderer would turn home.
[*Faust falls to his knees; he bows his head. Again the organ throbs, the choir sings.*

VOICES SINGING

To His peace shalt thou yield thee;
In His love shalt thou sleep;
All the rills of thy valleys
Shall merge in His deep.

To His hands shalt thou offer
All hope thou hast known.
His hope and His glory
Shall compass thine own.

And the vain stars of longing
Shall fade in His sun;
And the vain hand shall stay;
And His Will Shall Be Done.

SATAN

Let us beside our brother kneel in prayer
Beseeching mercy.

[*Satan and Brander kneel beside Faust.*

BRANDER

Brother in the Lord,
Let us together from devoted hearts
Repeat: "Thy Will Be Done."

[*Faust continues to kneel in silence. The music ceases.*

BRANDER

Faust, let us pray:
"Father, we do beseech Thee for Thy light" . . .

SATAN

Brother, pray thus: "Thy Will Be Done" . . .

FAUST (*rising*)

What will? . . .

BRANDER

Faust!

FAUST

Lost is my way among eternal shadows.
Darkened is every light; and clouds are rolled
With blackening curtain over all the stars
Within my heaven. But I stand upright
Now to the end, no traitor to that dawn
I cannot image.

SATAN

What do you mean?

FAUST

Begone,
Judas! . . .

Ah, Brander, would that I could yield
Myself to Him who has received your burdens!
But to me seems it as another sleep,
Like that Nirvana which I put aside
In other gardens of temptation. Sleep —
Sleep that should have no waking — happy sleep —
An anodyne for which my spirit yearns
But dare not take — a yielding to some Will,
Whose Will, we know not, nor do greatly care
So long it be not our will. . . .
Thus may yield
The weary; I am weary, but not yet
To such last slumber. Thus may yield the base;
I am not base. Thus may those spirits yield
Who, poisoned by some madness in their blood,
Despise life's being; but not yet will I
So utterly despise it. Though in gulfs
Of yet unsounded ruin I should die
At the end miserably, I still shall seek
In life itself my refuge: not in God
That stands apart from life, on heights of peace.
All my desires, my visions, my dreams, my unrest,
My loathing and my longing will I clutch
And cry: "With all its bitterness on my head,
My Will be done, not Thy Will!"

BRANDER

Blasphemy!
Ah, Faust, what madness! . . .

FAUST

With calm sight, I speak
No blasphemy, but truth. Shall I buy peace
So easily? Toss my burdens to God's Will —
Into the fathomless void of that unknown?
Such were the last, the great apostacy. . . .
I go into a darkness past your thought —
Into an emptiness you know not of —
A night profounder that it late has held
Marsh-lights of promise. My last altar lies
Smoking in ruins; and I stand alone
Of all the universe. But my Will be done!
My errant tortured Will, my bitter Will,
My Will, *my* Will!

BRANDER

Flee, ere the awful wrath
Of God smite down these walls, these poisoned stones,
That hear your words! Flee, ere the heavens rain forth
Lightnings to blast us for these horrors!

FAUST

Nay!
In this dim hour of desolation's reign
Upon my soul, I summon to my soul
All powers that good or evil may consign
To the most lonely man in all the world;
I lift my voice, burdened with all the weight
Of loathing and of longing, and I cry:
My curse upon Thee, lure of dying hearts!
May lightnings smite Thy altars back to earth!

BRANDER

Father, forgive! He knows not what he does. . . .

CURTAIN

THE FOURTH ACT

The scene is a public lecture-hall. To the left rises a platform, on which stands a reading-desk. To the right are rows of chairs arranged as for an audience. In the front row of these sit four old men, patiently and silently waiting. One is reading a newspaper.

Suddenly there bursts into the hall a rout of wildly gay and dancing maskers: Harlequin, Columbine, a Pig, Pantaloon, an enormously tall Ghost, Clowns, a Skeleton, Ballet-girls, Oriental Princesses, Monks, Courtiers, Turks and Jew Pedlers. The first few attempt to draw back on seeing the chairs and the four old men; but they are pushed on by those behind. Once in, they all circle about in a crazy dance, singing over and over the same verse.

THE MASKERS

Oh, children, children, New Year's Day
Is more than half a year away.
And we might get most awful dry
If we should wait for the Fourth of July.
So let us celebrate now and here
With rah, rah, rah and a bottle of beer!

[*One of the maskers, who is dressed as a clown, raises his hands, ineffectually trying to hush the rest.*

CLOWN (*shouting*)

Stop! Stop! I want to teach another verse

To you before we go back to the others.

[*Loud laughter. The song continues.*

THE SKELETON (*shouting*)

Is n't one bad enough?

CLOWN

A poor thing — but

It is mine own.

THE PIG

So much the worse for you!

ONE OF THE OLD MEN (*rising*)

Gentlemen! There 's to be a lecture here.

CLOWN

Is that all? Well, I 'll give it you myself.

A MONK

Not if we see you first!

THE PIG

My God! Let 's run!

SKELETON

Back! Or the others will drink all the punch!

[*The mob of maskers turbulently surges out again, leaving the hall quiet and empty except for the four old men.*

AN OLD MAN

They are a noisy lot.

SECOND OLD MAN

Yes.

THE FIRST OLD MAN

There must be

Party upstairs?

SECOND OLD MAN

Yes, I suppose there is.

FIRST OLD MAN

They begin early.

THIRD OLD MAN

Early? Yes, or late.
This is the end of last night's party, which
Began at twelve, and likely 'll last till noon.
I know, for I 'm the janitor.

FIRST OLD MAN

Well! Well!

[*Two men enter, look around and take seats in the chairs set for the audience. One carries a small black surgical case; the other has a green bag under his arm.*

DOCTOR

We seem to be a little early — or
Have we made some mistake?

LAWYER

No, ten 's the hour.
But I was anxious that we should be prompt,
And so have rather overdone our haste.

DOCTOR

It does n't matter; we can wait a bit.
How curiously impatient, though, you are
To hear this talk! I personally have doubts
Whether it 's worth our trouble.

LAWYER

Well, I know
The man, however slightly; you do not,
And so can hardly share my expectation.
But he has been, throughout these many years,
So secretive, so self-contained, so deep
In matters that I could not guess, that now,
When he at last promises to proclaim
Some strange discovery, I half believe
It will be worth our coming.

[*Two women enter together. The younger one is leading a child by the hand. The older, a gaunt, spinsterly-looking figure, peers about with a near-sighted glance.*

MERCHANT'S WIFE

Take that seat.
And now be quiet.

CHILD

Mother, will he have
The Devil with him?

MERCHANT'S WIFE

I don't know. The child
Has been completely crazy since I told her
That I would bring her with me.

OLD WOMAN

I am just
A little curious myself. I learned
When I was young all that they thought was known
About the Devil; and if this Mr. Faust
Has really made some new discovery
About him, it seems well that even the young
Should be informed of it.

[*A number of detached men and women enter and take seats silently. They are followed by two plumbers in overalls, carrying the tools of their trade still with them.*

YOUNG PLUMBER

Whew, but the boss will skin us for this trick!

OLD PLUMBER

Go, if you like. But I intend to stay.
I have not been, through seventeen long years,
Philosopher myself, now to let slip
A chance of hearing such a talk as this.

YOUNG PLUMBER

Oh, I won't go.

OLD PLUMBER

You 'd better not. They say
That all the rumors wholly underrate
The real importance of his talk to-day.
I 've been informed, on good authority,
That he will have the Devil on the platform
And publicly enchain him to a cart
For all of us to see.

[*The two plumbers have taken their seats. A man behind them leans forward now and interrupts them.*

BUTCHER

What 's that? A cart?
He means to drive the Devil as a horse?

OLD PLUMBER

Quite probably, quite probably.

BUTCHER

Well, that
Will be outrageous, in these troubled times
Of strikes and lock-outs. Without any doubt,
If he goes trying to harness up the Devil,
It will precipitate a teamsters' strike.
Using non-union horses always does.

YOUNG PLUMBER

Do you think that? Why, that would be a shame,
When times are bad already.

CHILD

Mother, Mother!
Will there be moving pictures?

MERCHANT'S WIFE

I don't know.

Don't talk so loud.

[*Two prosperous-looking men enter. One is elderly, the other young.*

BANKER

Do not apologize
Now that you've brought me. As I said at first,
I am prepared to see a mountebank
Perform his pretty tricks of eloquence
To set the crowd agape. Why, once a week
The Ethical Society hires one
To work the same performance — quite the same
Each time. Unearth a few forgotten doubts,
Or dig your elbow into some new dogma,
And you will see the mob fawn at your feet,
Believing you the greatest mind since Plato.

RICH YOUNG MAN

I 'm sure he is n't that kind.

BANKER

We shall see!
And afterwards, the drinks shall be on you.

[*A gawky young man who has flour in his hair, and a vivacious and pertly dressed girl enter together.*

GIRL

I go to all the lectures that I can.
I do think culture is the grandest thing;
And one acquires it so easily
Nowadays that one should n't let it slip.

BAKER

I 'd go to lectures, too, if I could go
Always with you.

GIRL

Well, now, perhaps I 'll try
To educate you!

BAKER

Oh, I wish you would!

[*Satan enters, dressed as an artisan. He takes a seat in the far corner, out of sight of the platform. Two young men enter. Both have books under their arms.*

YOUNG STUDENT

His is the subtlest mind I ever knew.
The gulfs through which he whirled bewildered me
When he would talk. So I am quite prepared
For a great treat to-day.

YOUNGER STUDENT

Oh, I forgot
My note-book. Can you tear a sheet from yours?

SATAN (*to a man beside him who rises, apparently tired of waiting*)

What, going? Well, I would n't, if I were you.
You ought to hear this: I have had a hand
In getting him to speak; and I am sure
There will be something doing.

THE MAN

Well, I 'll stay,
Since you, of the committee, vouch for it.

[*More people enter and take their seats.*

YOUNG PLUMBER (*to his companion*)

What do you get by being philosopher?
I don't see how you do it. I could never
Think about nothing all the time, like you.

OLD PLUMBER

Perhaps your mind is not just made for it.
It takes a thinker, that it does. And I
Did not get into it so easy, either.
I read a lot of books before I saw

The greatness of Philosophy. Now I wonder
How I got on without it. Why, to-day
I could not clean a sewer in peace of mind
If I did not know that, when I got home,
I could philosophize on Space and Time.

YOUNG PLUMBER

It must be wonderful to know these things.

[*Brander and Midge enter together. They seem to find some difficulty in choosing their seats.*

MIDGE

Are you quite sure that we can hear him here?

BRANDER

Yes; and besides, I do not wish to sit
Too near the front. I 'd rather not have come
At all to-day. But you . . .

MIDGE

Oh, don't go back
Now on your promise! I must hear him speak.
I must, I must. I cannot tell you why;
I do not know. But I have never seen
A face that seemed to promise me so much —
Things that I cannot utter, cannot think.

BRANDER

I never want to see his face again.
I shall try not to listen.

CHILD

Mother, when
Will the show start?

MERCHANT'S WIFE

Hush, very soon! Yes, see —
There he is coming in.

CHILD

Oh, goody, goody!

[*Faust enters the hall and mounts the platform. He busies himself for a moment adjusting the reading desk; then turns toward the audience, gripping the desk steadily, and waits a moment more for the stir to subside.*

FAUST

I come before you with unwilling lips —
Not led by eagerness, or wont of speech;
Being not of those who easily proclaim
Small miracles to move you. But the force
Of grave necessity has bid me cast
All thought save one aside, and in your midst,
Utter strange words, with lips that must obey
The soul that wills not silence.

For I come
Announcing not the common verities
Of learned books, or laboratory lore,
Or ancient heresies; as speaks the fool,
So speak I — from my heart. What I have seen,
That shall you see, and with grim gladness hold
Close in your hearts. Yes, all the world shall see it —
I am a tower burning to light the world!
(*He pauses a moment, meditatively*)

OLD WOMAN (*whispering*)

He has a good opinion of himself.

FAUST

I have beheld the toil and pain of life,
Its emptiness and defeat; I have beheld
Hearts, weary with recurrence of the days
That held no sweetness, turn in trust to where

In high aërial spaces far from earth
God in his heaven to all the weary ones
Offers a refuge. And in such a mood
Was I, too, led toward heaven by one whom now
I know my foe — Satan. Toward God I turned,
Seeking in Him fulfilment of all hopes
That earth had thwarted. Then, in the hour of prayer
And revelation, from my deepest breast
Flashed lightnings. And I saw the Lord of Hosts
High on a mountain, inaccessible
To yearning men, who, mastered by a dream,
Turn skyward from our dark and struggling earth.
I saw the crafty Satan urging on
The heavenward-yearning myriads, while the world
Lay like a stagnant quagmire, to his sway
Wholly abandoned, and man's mortal house
Burned in fierce conflagration of corruption.
And lo! the lightnings from my heart smote forth
Across the heavens; and God dissolved like cloud,
And through the cloud peered Satan's sinister face.

Friends: God is dead; your God and mine is dead.
And Satan in his place — Satan who is
The father of the gods — lures on your hearts
Unto an idol in the untrodden skies,
That, while ye dream oblivious in the void,
The earth may crumble. Or if God there be,
He is the God of dying hearts and spent —
A deity of chaos, for whose ends
One thing alone is mete — ruin of life,
Of loathings and of longings that on earth
Restlessly grapple with the powers of Hell.

I know not if in regions yet unguessed
Some gods may dwell, of nature fit to guide
Us, the adventurers of an earthly fight.
But I have seen with eyes that cannot lie
That they reside not in this Devil's net —
This heavenly trust, this labyrinth of peace,
Which draws men on to nothingness. . . .

And I cry
With all the passion of my baffled soul —
Cast down your God! Cast down your peace and trust
In His far Will! It is a solace mete
For slaves, not men. With bitter hand, destroy
This idol of destruction! Smite all haunts
Of faith and resignation and defeat
And rest and peace and comfort. Heaven and earth
Alike are poisoned: somnolence in heaven,
Decay on earth is regnant. Every faith
And law and nation must in wreck go down
For us who see the death that taints their halls;
And ruin shall walk reckless through the world,
Destroying tombs where life is daily slain!
(*Faust pauses*)

BRANDER (*rises suddenly from his place in the audience*)
My friends, I came to listen, not to speak.
But when such words as these from impious lips
Fall lightly, I must rise here to refute
Their poisonous message. Three days since, I stood
With this man in the sacred halls of God,
And witnessed in his heart the glory grow
Of God's bright hope. Then suddenly from Hell,
Or from his own deep, labyrinthine heart,

Sprang fiends to snatch him back from heaven's clear gate
And God's deliverance. And his bitter lips,
By thirst so nearly quenched made bitterer yet,
Cried blasphemies against the powers of heaven
And all bright starry hopes that light our days
With faith and glory. And the hand of God,
Inscrutably withheld, smote him not dumb,
But suffered him to go. Now in our sight
He rises to proclaim his searing doubt,
His hot destroying passion, and tears down
Our fairest altars. I, who was his friend,
Hereby renounce him; and in sober words
Counsel all men to flee the company
Of one who hates the great hopes of the world!
[*As Brander sits down, there is some scattered applause in the audience. Faces are turned toward him. Midge sits motionless, her face buried in her hands.*

FAUST

I scarce foresaw that my laborious task
Should profit by the aid of willing hands
So freely offered. Well, the Devil moves still
Unchained on earth; and while he toils, your toil
Is of small matter. You have ranged yourself
With things fast dying; and our feet — the feet
Of trampling hordes — shall pass above your head,
As we shall pass over all creeds and laws,
All stately chambers and respected homes
And hearths and council-halls and sleek vile marts —
We, the destroyers of destruction!

BUTCHER

Here!
Don't you go shaking any fist at me!

GIRL

I think it 's awful. Someone ought to stop him.

MERCHANT'S WIFE

The man is crazy!

OLD PLUMBER

Say! Would you destroy
Space and Time, too?

YOUNG PLUMBER

Hooray for hell broke loose!

BUTCHER

Out with him! He 's an anarchist!

BANKER

I 'm not
Religious; but I cannot stand for that.

YOUNG STUDENT

Oh, let him have a chance!

BUTCHER

Not if I know it!
Damn such a man!

[*Satan suddenly rises in his place with commanding gestures. The people stare at him, and after a moment are silent to hear him speak.*

SATAN

My friends, I think we all —
Or most of us — agree that talk like this
Is a destructive influence, to be met
With frowns, in justice to society.
Such words disgrace humanity, affront
Respectability, and fill with shame
Our hearts for such a speaker. Yet the rogue
Requires but rope to save the law the toil
Of trial and execution. I bespeak,

Therefore, your patience for this gentleman;
Till he has time to wind the hempen knot
Securely round his throat, let us sit by
And hear him further.

FAUST

Thank you. You begin
Well in my service.

SATAN

Aye, indeed, indeed!
You don't suppose a mouse-trap baits itself?
Friends, let us hear him.

RICH YOUNG MAN

That sounds sensible.

YOUNG PLUMBER

Let each dog have his day.

OLD PLUMBER

Sit down! Shut up!

YOUNG PLUMBER

Leave me alone!

SATAN

One moment more, I pray,
Of your kind patience. Sir, ere you proceed,
I have a word to give you. I have heard
Tales of your cleverness in foiling twice
The Devil who sought to lead you to resign
Your will to his. Perhaps it was not well
That you so spurned his euthanasia.
By your own devious path, you come at last
To where all facts are vain, all visions fade,
And your old wager is a laughing-stock,
So valueless your will, so vain your power
To shape one end of hope. Life crumbles, falls,
Around you; and your kind with horror see

Your utter nakedness. But I have brought
A little present for you: not so nice
As two the Devil once offered in its place;
Yet 't will suffice. Men who would cheat the Devil
Come, with a curious unanimity,
To where the lump of lead becomes a boon
Unto the soul rejecting easier sleep.
The Devil claims his own in his own day.
(*He approaches the platform, and offers to Faust a pistol*)

YOUNG STUDENT
What is he saying?

CHILD
Are they going to shoot?

YOUNG PLUMBER
Bang yourself one! That 's what it 's for.

BUTCHER
Good riddance!
There is n't room on earth for jokes like you!

FAUST (*accepts the pistol*)
In such a spirit as you offer it,
I do accept this token. In my hand
At least it shall lie safe, nor be a god:
I worship not the bullet. . . . But beware
What mummer's part you play in this strange scene.
For by the victory I have won of late,
I am your master! And in grovelling dust
Before me you shall cringe, though all the world
Shun me, your conqueror. Vilest of slaves!
Accept your servitude!

BUTCHER
Here! That 's enough!

GIRL

You brute!

SATAN

Your slave. Command, and it shall be
Fulfilled. A little snarling now and then
Means naught.

YOUNG PLUMBER

I will not let an honest man,
A worthy citizen, be spoken to
Like that by a damn anarchist while I
Can raise a hand!

BUTCHER

Nor I!

MERCHANT'S WIFE

Go after him!

FAUST

Silence! Let not your eager efforts prove
You are the beast-herd he would bid you be!

YOUNG PLUMBER

What! Let us show him how to talk to us!

SATAN

See, on his forehead, see! Where the deep lines
Meet — do you see the blackened cross that grows
Each moment darker with the curse of God!
He is branded, he is Cain!

FAUST

Down, slave! Fulfil
Now my command, you who my bondsman are!
Seal on these eyes — too blind to take the light —
Darkness! And let me, turning from them, know
They have not peered into my open heart.
You are still my slave — though they are only fools.

YOUNG PLUMBER

Damn your infernal soul!

BUTCHER

Hit him a crack!

OLD WOMAN

Stop all your noise.

BUTCHER

Here, let me go, you fool!

[*Suddenly aroused, some of the crowd surge forward toward the platform. From the back of the room someone hurls a chair, which strikes the great chandelier: the lights instantly go out, leaving the hall in total darkness. Confused cries, footsteps, blows.*

CRIES

What 're you about? . . . Let go! . . . Where are the lights? . . .

[*Suddenly two wall-brackets are illuminated, disclosing part of the crowd massed on the platform. As they surge back, there remains on the platform, fallen and motionless, the figure of Faust. He raises his head slowly.*

FAUST

Ah, Satan! . . . worthy serf to my command! . . .
Go! I release you. For I would not die
With such a slave — Nay, though I die alone. . . .

[*Suddenly the door bursts open, and in surge the maskers, in greater numbers and even wilder tumult than before. Dancing grostesquely, linked hand in hand, they zigzag through the hall, overturning chairs and singing at the top of their voices.*

THE MASKERS

Oh, children, children, children dear,
We cannot wait for any New Year.
So let us celebrate now and here
With rah, rah, rah and a bottle of beer!

CURTAIN

THE FIFTH ACT

The scene is once more Faust's library. The dim slanting sunlight of late afternoon streams through the open windows, touching the gold of books and the brown of furniture with an enamel-like brilliancy.

Brander and Faust's butler stand just inside the door.

BUTLER

I am afraid you cannot see him now.
The doctor is still here. I do not know
If anyone may see him.

BRANDER

I will wait
A moment, and perhaps may see the doctor
As he goes out. Have things been bad to-day?

BUTLER

Yes, sir.

[*The doctor enters from the door on the left. The butler goes out.*

BRANDER

How is he?

DOCTOR

As one might expect.
The fever 's gone; but strength has gone with it:
No one can tell how long his heart will stand
The strain.

BRANDER

You see no hope?

DOCTOR

I only see
That we are doing all we can for him.
Beyond that, I can say no more than you.

BRANDER

You think I should not see him?

DOCTOR

Oh, no harm.
You might have seen him when you came this morning
If you had waited. You can see him here.
He wanted to be in this room again,
And I make no objection. Well, good-bye.

[*The doctor goes out. Brander moves restlessly about the room. A moment later, the door on the left opens, and Faust, reclining in an invalid's chair, is wheeled into the room by the butler. He is clad in a long dressing-gown; he is very pale. The butler, after placing the chair before the fireplace, goes out. Brander remains doubtfully in the background; Faust does not observe his presence.*

FAUST

Again these walls!—home to what barren dreams!—
And home to me! O dreams and bitterness,
How are you gilded by this setting light
Of afternoon! Meseems I have not been
Happy save here, where all unhappiness
Of mine had source and root. That forest holds
Now nothing grievous to my eyes that see
What once they saw not. Sweetness like the light
Of setting suns now lingers over it

In my enchambering memory — Life, life
With all its glow and wonder pours a flood
On this strait room whence I have watched the world —
Whence I must go with all my love and wonder
As though no love and wonder I had won.
[*Faust bends his head, sinking into a daze of thought. Brander doubtfully approaches him, and at last touches his shoulder.*

BRANDER

I have been heavy-hearted; but that thus
I find you, overwhelms me. . . .

FAUST

Why thus sad
Over milk so irrevocably spilled?

BRANDER

I cannot utter what is in my heart.
It is as though I had with my own hand
Stricken you down. And yet I did not dream
Of what would follow. . . . O Faust, Faust, forgive me!

FAUST

Forgive you? Aye, and thank you! Greater things
Hung imminent than you dreamed of. For you set
Wild lightnings free in me that smote the dark
Furled round me; and they grew and flashed and flamed
Even as I fell. Aye, Brander, you who strove
For my salvation should rejoice at last —
Now, past all doubts and wanderings, I am saved!

BRANDER

Saved! Ah, impossible!

FAUST

Saved! And the light
Of glory fills me, though my physical frame
Totters on dissolution. I believe! . . .
The night is over.

BRANDER

Faust! O dearest friend!
My heart refuses now to grasp such joy.
If it were possible! Can, can it be
That God has bent once more, and with cool touch
Dispelled the feverous mists? Oh, I could weep
With happiness to dream it!

FAUST

Nay, my words
Mean more than you interpret. I am saved —
Not as you count salvation. Nay, I come
To one last refuge, finding all others vain.
The common joys, the peace of nescience,
The trust in some far Will, the hope to flame
A beacon in the darkness of men's dreams:
Driven forth from these, one citadel still lifts
Heaven-fronting: there I stand, delivered, free,
Master again — that citadel, my soul.
I have escaped from all the bondages;
And now bow down to nothing. Joy or pain,
Defeat or conquest, good or evil, now
Lure me no more. I will put hope in nothing
Save in that whole strange glistening mortal life
That past me streams unto an end sublime
Whereof you know not. All our ends are folly,
And win not what they seek; yet there is joy
In seeking; and one end there is that shows
A brighter glow. I am the watcher set

Upon the heights. In my impassioned sight
All life is holy that strives unto life:
Death only is damnation. I will be
More happy than the happiest man, more strong
Than is the strongest! I will climb on the neck
Of this great monster, Life, and guide its course —
For I am master — toward that end I see
Hidden afar off.

BRANDER

You are sick and spent.
I should not thus —

FAUST

Fear not; I do not wander.
Or can you understand? No, no, you cannot.
And yet some tenderness from days long past
Stirs in me with a hope for you once more —
Hear me for one last time.
[*Faust touches a bell. The butler enters.*

FAUST

Bring to me, please,
That large black-covered manuscript I wrote
Last night until the doctor took it from me.
It is among the papers on my desk.
[*The butler searches, finds the note-book and places it on the table beside Faust. The butler goes out. Faust sits turning over the pages of the manuscript.*

FAUST

Here to posterity I bequeath my soul —
Worthless, perhaps, as heritage, but the all
I have to give to them I love so much.
These pages shall cry kinship to the few
Who, finding solace nowhere, yet shall find

Solace in fierce destruction that assails
The folly and the madness of mankind.
(*He begins to read from the manuscript*)

Satan recedes; but thou who seemest near —
O unborn man, whose soul is of my soul,
Whose glory is of my glory — all my love
Floods out like light from the down-going sun
Toward thee, the nursling of a lofty line.
Thou art my faith — man the divine to come —
Man whom I loathe for that which he is not —
Man, even now half divine because of all
That shall spring from him in the days to be.
Thou, too, shalt fight with Satan, as I fought,
Yea, in eternal battles till the end.
Thou shalt go with him past the lure of lust,
The lure of power, the lure of that great sleep
Nirvana; past the yet more luring sleep
Where dreams assuage the soul to be a dream.
Thou shalt go with him, yet apart from him
And all his works. He has no part in thee.
He is the chaos seething at earth's core —
Remnant of times when out of chaos sprang
Life's upward impulse. He is the darkness spread
Ere yet was light — the matter ere was form —
The vast inertia that on motion's heels
Clings viper-like. Of life and form and growth
He is negator; and his ceaseless joy
Is to impede and drag to chaos back
The shoot that toward the light triumphant springs.

But vain his victories, though he lingers yet
With slowly narrowing frontiers. Past his will,

Slowly the sons of light transcend, remould
Their day and destiny; slowly there is born
Order from chaos, flowers from formless mud,
Light from the darkness, Faust's from Satan's soul.

With laughing and with wonder and with triumph
I take that life and clasp it to my breast —
I, part of all, and all a part of me —
Streaming a river flashing in the sun.
I am drunk with the glory of that which tramps
me down
And passes and transcends me — and is mine!

I, one with thee, O child of Flame, behold
Thy harvest — when the passion of the years
Turns earthward, and in mastered order sets
The house that is our dwelling. And therein,
In the gold light of summer afternoons,
With thee I too, careless and laughing, play
Mid dreams and wonders that our will has made —
Bathe in the beauty that our eyes have poured
Upon the hills — and drink in thirsty draughts
The happiness we have rained upon the earth.

I see, with ultimate unshaken vision!
I see the earthly paradise; I see
Men winged with wonder on the future throne
Up infinite vistas where life's feet shall climb.
Out of the dust, out of the plant and worm,
Out of ourselves about whose feet still clings
The reptile-slime of our creation — lo!
Our children's children rise; and all my love
Draws toward them and the light upon their brows.

This is my faith; this is my happiness;
This is my hope of heaven; this is my God.

BRANDER

The eternal God in heaven forgive you this!

FAUST

The Devil I can foil, but not my friends!
Strange allies to his cause! Well, dusk was long
My portion; now all gathering storms of hate
Are less than naught to me. Six months ago,
When here I stood that memorable night,
My gloom was starless; now one fiery star
Pierces it. And this broken frame of mine
Cannot annul that much of victory —
The solace born of passion to destroy
That shall survive me if indeed I die.
Alone my life was lived; if now I go,
It is alone into a quiet grave
Above whose mound the fairer future days
Shall pass, and I not know them. Yet my night
Takes foregleam from the vision of that dawn
And I am solaced. And I leave my solace
As heritage to the ever widening few
Who after me shall triumph more than I
In dawns of flaming.

BRANDER

O my friend, my friend,
I would my tongue could cry as my heart cries —
Turn back from darkness before the hour has struck!
Even yet may mercy fold you. God is great
And tender; and perhaps His love may clasp
Even your aloofness, if at last your heart

Calls in repentance to Him. O Faust, Faust,
Sink your vain pride of spirit — kneel to Him —
Beseech His mercy ere it is too late!

FAUST

I am no melancholy death-bed scene
To claim your tears, dear Brander. Doubtless days
Of infinite scope lie yet before me, since
No oracle has foretold that I shall die.
But if I die, then go I singing down,
Not praying or repentant, to my grave.
I would smite again the altar! I would smite
The hearts bowed before it; all the world
And the Beyond-world would I rend, having seen
Serpents in their secret places.

BRANDER

Has no breath
Of heavenly love touched this corrosive core
Of hell-fire in you?

FAUST

There is none whose power
Is half so mighty.

BRANDER

Through last night's long hours,
Poor Midge, alone and comfortless, wept out
Her heart, believing all that you had said.
And when I spoke to her, she cried: "Go, go!
I am lost where none can help me; all my dreams
Shudder and perish, even as he has perished;
Yet they shall live again — but he will die!" . . .
Thus darkness falls from you upon men's hearts.
I know not if God's deep forgiving love
To such as you is granted. . . .

FAUST

Midge could tell
A truer tale. Her eyes were full of light
And wonder as she heard me.

BRANDER

And she now
Weeps comfortless!

FAUST

And shall I then regret?
Is her soul yours, that you appraise and know?
Life stirs in her: and like the agonies
Of all life's birth, it shakes her: yet one day
She shall rise strong, sister to mighty winds,
A new and holy wonder in her eyes.
Tell her from me that I have not forgotten
My promise in the church that I would come.
But if I come not, let her come to me! —
Let her come with me on my luminous road.

BRANDER

Pity her, and the hosts that with her stand
Shelterless from the blasts of your wild hate.

FAUST

Who loves must hate, who hates must burn with love. . . .
I hate the world; but like the breath of life,
Sustaining me even yet a little while,
Is my surpassing love for its great hopes.
Aye, in the hour when I knew myself alone,
My hate cried: Smite! — because of thy great love
For one irradiant form that is to be.
Now is my hate a lamp of tenderness —
Now I destroy because I love beyond —

I build, I triumph with bright domes that rise
In laughing loveliness into the morning!

BRANDER

I love you and I pity you — and I go.

FAUST

We shall not meet again.

[*Brander goes out.*

FAUST

He will go down
Not singing, no, not singing! . . .
(*He once more takes up the manuscript, and turns to the last pages*)
And now, when from my shoulders like a load
Begins to slip the weariness of life,
And a new vigor fills me — now it seems
That death is hovering close. O Grisly One,
Whom once I thought a not unwelcome guest
To my cold troubled house, I am not glad
To hear thy steps without. For in my halls
Lights kindle, and the music sobs and sings
In ecstasy of other guests than thee. . . .
(*He takes up his pen and turns to the end of the manuscript, as if to write*)
Can this poor strength suffice me to complete
These final words? Nay, better to leave unsaid
The few last lines my vanity desires
To tell and justify my end and fall
Like flourish of bright trumpets. Let them sleep
Unuttered; for the burden of my song
Is voiced already in these labored leaves;
And it is well, unfinished and unclosed
Should stop this record, whose concluding words
Of fairer hope, of sheerer miracle,

Some greater hand than mine shall some day write
And seal the chronicle — nay, never seal it!
[*The butler enters.*

BUTLER

There is a man waiting to see you, sir.

FAUST

Let him come in.

BUTLER

I beg your pardon, sir —
Can I do nothing for you?

FAUST

Thank you, nothing.
[*The butler goes out again. Satan enters. He is dressed in a long black cloak of foreign cut; for the first time, he has the look of sinister majesty appropriate to the Prince of Hell.*

SATAN

Master, your slave is here!

FAUST

This fooling still?

SATAN

What little service would my conqueror wish?

FAUST

Peace from your childish talk. The game is done.
Quite well you knew that, came I victor forth,
I would not, for all treasure in the world,
Have such an one as servant, who can serve
No end that I desire.

SATAN

Aha! At last
Light penetrates that cobwebbed cranium,
And I can laugh in public! All these months,

I several times have come perilously near
Bursting with mirth at the rare spectacle.

FAUST

Pray you, laugh freely.

SATAN

Nay, my mirth is spent.
My heart is moved even toward an enemy,
When on his head defeat its torrent pours.
I offer you my sympathy.

FAUST

My thanks
Are in appropriate measure tendered you.

SATAN

Distrust me not, for lo, the game is done —
There are no battles more, no testings more
To set between us. From the heart of life
Have forces risen—aye, from the people's breast!—
To seal the measure of defeat; and now
Why shall we quarrel further?

FAUST

Why, indeed?

SATAN

I hear that you are working on a book
Recounting your adventures with the Devil.
I hope 't is finished: it had better be!
You will not write large libraries, my friend,
In what of life remains to you.

FAUST

It is
Completed wholly.

SATAN

May I look at it?

FAUST

You may not.

SATAN

Ah, 't is a surprise for me!

FAUST

Possibly.

SATAN

Well, you work late into dusk.
Dusk falls about you; soon the night will come,
And silence. . . . Has an oracle in your heart
Whispered the tidings of that night? Or have
The pages of the prophets told to you
What waits within that darkness?

FAUST

There waits sleep.
But I have lived, and do not fear life's last
Inevitable word.

SATAN

My lips are sealed,
Though I would fain prepare you for that first
And awful moment when, beyond death's gates,
You see and know — for now you do not know —
What there awaits you. You have seen the grave;
You know the dissolution and decay
That folds the body as it mouldering lies
After the racking of those final hours
Where soul and body part. But have you guessed
That — as the body rots without the soul —
So the soul crumbles in a vile decay
You cannot picture, when the body dies?
Then falls the spirit limb from reeking limb.
An agony beyond all mortal thought
Shakes every atom of the spiritual frame —

The throes of dissolution. Death, indeed,
All men can bear; but this last spiritual death,
This torture of the disembodied soul
To force dissolving — ah, prepare yourself!
It shall appall you!

FAUST

If it comes, it comes.

SATAN

We have been foes; but now I speak as friend.
This shall not come to you! 'T is in my power
To save you from this uttermost horror's grasp.
For I have gift of perfect dreamless sleep;
And those to whom I give shall after death
Slumber unconscious while the awful change
Attacks them; and oblivion shall be theirs
Unbroken stretching from the final hour.

FAUST

That were a boon not easily despised.

SATAN

It shall be yours! My crushed and broken foe
Shall never at my hand lack final rest
Where nightmares cannot come. As honest foes
We shall be quit. And for this priceless gift
I ask but that you give me, as remembrance,
That book which you have wrought concerning me.

FAUST

Why still so eager?

SATAN

Eager? I am not.

FAUST

Satan, my soul still sees, though death has drawn
Its curtains round my body. You have sought

With long endeavor to enslave my will
To nothingness; now would you doom to dark
My sublimated soul, my written word,
My force immortal. . . .
(*He takes up the pen*)
This, Satan, is your answer —
(*He writes on the last sheet of the manuscript*)
"With this last word I close my testament:
'Man, work thy will, and God shall come of thee.'"

SATAN

Poor thwarted fool, who would not take my lures,
Being far too wise! Yet dustward now he turns,
And where Faust stood shall nothingness survive!

FAUST

Approach me not: I have grown sanctified.
Loathing the night and dreaming of the dawn,
I claim some kinship with the Eternal Power
Which in the dust, the daisy and the star
Moves onward in its self-ordainèd sway —
Life everlasting. Through my veins it sweeps,
Bearing me onward; and as I am borne,
I onward urge, till my short day be done
And I fall spent; and over me the wave
Sweeps on its way immortal; and my soul
Partakes of that lost immortality.

SATAN

Dreamer, whose dreams shall soon be choked with dust!

FAUST (*slowly rising*)

I am that dreamer to whose mounting dreams
No bounds are set, no region which my will
May not reach out toward. And I will create —

I, and the souls that after me shall come —
By passion of desire a pillar of flame
Above the wastes of life. If no God be,
I will from my deep soul create a God
Into the universe to fight for me!
(*He sinks back*)

SATAN

How strong a master! Why not slay me now?
Put forth your strength, and try how great it be!

FAUST

Though dying, I am master. But you still
Are jester, even at death-beds — knowing well
I have no power to slay you. You retreat
But perish not; the sphere of your domain
Contracts, but it endures immortally.
Have done with jesting: look me in the eyes!
Acknowledge me, and all high heritors
Who shall succeed me, your eternal foe,
Your eternal victor in half-victories —
But never your destroyer to the last.

SATAN

I thank all prophets for their prophecy!
But I shall still remain? . . .

FAUST

You shall remain. . . .

SATAN

I shall remain! . . .

[*Faust and Satan sit silent, watching each other steadily. Faust closes his eyes, then suddenly raises himself in his chair.*

FAUST

Ah, what a ghastly dream!
Ghastly, for all its cold and lofty state.

Nay, what have I to do with yearning thoughts
Of immortality? I am young with life!
I shall not die! Hope and the eager years
Of labor rise before me as I press
Clear of these shadows. I have dreamed dark dreams —
One very dark of late — but now my blood
Resurges in a not less passionate fire
Than when, less wise, I stretched my hands to life,
And all my hopes were winged. But that is past;
And dreams are past: the day of deed is come.
Aye, in the cities, on the hills of the world,
I shall uplift the banner of high wars —
I shall make mock of this strange dizziness —
I shall live — and Death retreats from me afraid!

SATAN

What! Then I 'll do his office!

FAUST

Spare your pains
The tide of strength recedes, swift as it came. . . .
Oldham! I cannot die! I cannot die! . . .
And I am dying. . . .

[*Faust sinks back with closed eyes. The door opens softly and the butler enters, followed by Midge who carries an armful of flowers. She looks around the room, bewildered; then crosses quickly to Faust's chair.*

SATAN

Madam, you come too late.

[*Faust opens his eyes — and, lifting the manuscript, with feeble hand holds it out to her.*

FAUST

No, not too late. . . . Touch me across the dusk —

[*Midge, shaken and faltering, clasps the book to her. Doubtfully she touches his shoulder. Faust, slightly smiling, closes his eyes.*

CURTAIN

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